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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

**Report****Fifth meeting of the Executive Committee  
Beirut, 18-19 December 2018****Summary**

The Executive Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its fifth meeting at the United Nations House in Beirut, on 18 and 19 December 2018. The meeting was attended by representatives of ESCWA member States.

The meeting agenda covered several items, notably the implementation of the Beirut Consensus on Technology for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region and resolutions adopted at the thirtieth ESCWA session, and the implementation of recommendations made by the Executive Committee at its fourth meeting. The Executive Committee also considered several regional and global issues, including financing for development in the Arab region, progress in implementing the Arab Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, the Palestinian economy under the occupation, climate change in the Arab region, the Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development, and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and its relevance to the Arab region.

The present report summarizes the discussions under each agenda item and sets out the recommendations adopted at the meeting.

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## **Introduction**

1. The Technical Committee was established pursuant to the decision of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) at its twenty-fourth session, held in Beirut from 8 to 11 May 2006. At its twenty-eighth session, held in Tunis from 15 to 18 September 2014, ESCWA adopted resolution [320 \(XXVIII\)](#) on redesignating the Technical Committee as the “Executive Committee” and amending its terms of reference to empower it to facilitate direct communication between the secretariat and member States on development, economic and social issues, and to submit resolutions directly to the Economic and Social Council.
2. The Executive Committee held its fifth meeting at the United Nations House in Beirut on 18 and 19 December 2018. It discussed the items on its agenda, including progress in implementing recommendations made by the Committee at its fourth meeting, and progress in implementing the Beirut Consensus on Technology for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region and resolutions adopted at the thirtieth ESCWA session. The Executive Committee also considered several regional and global issues, including financing for development in the Arab region, progress in implementing the Arab Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, the Palestinian economy under the occupation, climate change in the Arab region, the Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development, and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.
3. The present report summarizes the discussions under each agenda item and sets out the recommendations adopted at the meeting.

### **I. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT ITS FIFTH MEETING**

4. The Executive Committee made the following recommendations.

#### **A. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ESCWA MEMBER STATES**

5. The Executive Committee made the following recommendations to ESCWA member States:

(a) Welcome the secretariat’s efforts in implementing recommendations made by the Committee at its fourth meeting, welcome proposed activities for implementing the Beirut Consensus on Technology for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region and reconfirm commitment to implementing the Beirut Consensus at the national level, and give presentations at Executive Committee meetings on progress in that regard in line with a follow-up mechanism developed by the secretariat;

(b) Take note of progress in implementing commitments set out in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, and of implementation gaps in the Arab region and the specific challenges it faces in funding national development plans; and identify priority areas for the region in the Action Agenda;

(c) Welcome the conference organized by the ESCWA secretariat on challenges in financing sustainable development, held in November 2018, to support the identification of financing priorities in the Arab region with the Group of 77 and China, to build on the Egyptian chairmanship’s actions in 2018 and the expected actions of the Palestinian chairmanship in 2019, and to reconfirm the importance of curbing illicit financial flows, money laundering, terrorism funding and tax evasion and the need for cooperation between countries that receive such flows in order to curb them;

(d) Take note of progress in implementing the Arab Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data that was adopted by the ESCWA Statistical Committee at its twelfth session, held in Beirut on 4 and 5

April 2017, and commend efforts by the secretariat to strengthen coordination between agencies working in that field and Governments;

(e) Stress the importance of collecting data from national sources, of benefiting from the secretariat's expertise in supporting national statistical offices to modernize statistical systems, and to update and use data dissemination programmes;

(f) Confirm that the continuing Israeli occupation and its policies and practices that violate international law are hampering sustainable development and causing near-absolute Palestinian economic dependency on Israel, and affirm support for the Palestinian people and institutions to ensure their full rights, including control of natural resources and of land, sea and air crossings and trade routes, undertake economic projects and achieve sustainable development;

(g) Continue benefiting from analyses, findings, recommendations and services in the field of climate change provided by the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies and refer to them when preparing policies, strategies, reports and research at the regional and national levels;

(h) Commend efforts to mobilize financial resources to support the activities of the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies, including the Regional Knowledge Hub under the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR), to provide knowledge resources relevant to the region's needs;

(i) Stress the importance of involvement in current preparations for climate change negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and of efforts by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in view of commitments sets out in the Paris Agreement;

(j) Take note of the report of the Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development: Five Years after the 2013 Cairo Declaration, held in Beirut from 30 October to 1 November 2018, and of the key messages emanating from the Conference, and submit it to the Commission on Population and Development at its fifty-second session as a document containing the principal messages from the Arab region and to the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;

(k) Welcome the secretariat's efforts to support Arab countries by building knowledge, facilitating regional dialogue and forging partnerships on population and development issues, and confirm the importance of integrating the population dimension in development planning and in preparing voluntary national reviews that consider progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

(l) Take note of the process to review progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years after their adoption in 1995, at the regional and national levels;

(m) Welcome the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which was adopted in Marrakesh, Morocco, on 10 December 2018, and affirm commitment to its principles given its significant importance to the Arab region; stress the importance of promoting regional cooperation in the field of migration management and governance under the Global Compact for Migration; and consider developing institutional infrastructure, strategies and public policy frameworks for migration governance, and strengthening coordination at the national and regional levels;

(n) Welcome the proposed programme plan for the year 2020 and its activities and its focus on challenges facing the Arab region and on equality and inclusiveness, and submit to the secretariat comments on the work programme by 4 January 2019.

## B. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ESCWA SECRETARIAT

6. The Executive Committee made the following recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat:

(a) Present a periodic report on progress in implementing the Beirut Consensus to the Executive Committee at its sixth meeting, establish a timeframe for the proposed activities, and develop a mechanism to follow up on the implementation of the Beirut Consensus at the national level;

(b) Allocate more human resources from the secretariat to the issue of financing for development so as to fulfil the significant responsibilities associated with financing challenges in the region and to increase technical cooperation activities in the field of financing for development at the national level through the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC) in order to support countries' specific needs, and mobilize extrabudgetary resources in that area;

(c) Keep pace with progress in financing for development and inform member States of milestones in that area, including international events in 2019 such as the Forum on Financing for Development of the Economic and Social Council, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development;

(d) Continue efforts to build the statistical capacity of member States to monitor SDG implementation under the Arab Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, and strengthen existing partnerships and coordination between Governments, specialized United Nations agencies and regional organizations;

(e) Provide technical support to member States in developing updated statistical strategies and support transformations in official statistics and the adoption of new data sources and types such as big data, in line with requirements for monitoring SDG achievement;

(f) Follow up, monitor and analyse Israeli policies, practices and violations of international law and submit periodic reports in that regard to member States, estimate the cumulative and long-term impact of the Israeli occupation, and conduct a comprehensive study of Israeli policies and practices over the past decades and of their interlinkages and interaction mechanisms;

(g) Support innovative mechanisms adopted by the Palestinian people to face the social and economic repercussions of the Israeli occupation and its practices, especially through the following:

(1) Analysis of household survey data, of economic and social patterns and trends resulting from Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory and of methods employed by the Palestinian people and institutions in dealing with them;

(2) Focus on Palestinian productive sectors and their potential, and on the challenges they face under the Israeli occupation and its practices, especially in the light of Israeli policies aimed at systematically maintaining the dependence of the Palestinian economy on Israel;

(h) Continue supporting member States that so wish in developing their institutional capacity to mitigate the impact of conflict and instability and their implications for development, including through reconstruction programmes, policy formulation, priority setting and evaluation of human capacity and functional competencies that can assist in facing challenges raised by current circumstances in the Arab region and in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(i) Continue preparing the periodic report on the social and economic situation of Palestinian women and highlight the impact of occupation on their right to access basic services, economic resources and social justice, and on their empowerment to participate in the development process;

(j) Intensify resource mobilization efforts to support the activities of the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies and ensure that those additional resources complement extrabudgetary and RPTC resources that support the Centre's work; and strengthen technical support in the field of adaptation, especially in the water and agriculture sectors, and in preparing project proposals to access available international financing;

(k) Continue holding regional consultations on climate change to support consensus-building and identification of priorities at the regional level on actions to address climate change under SDG 13, and refer to the outcomes of those consultations in regional preparations for the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and in regional contributions thereto;

(l) Conduct the regional review of the 2013 Cairo Declaration, in collaboration with the League of Arab States and the United Nations Population Fund, to be carried out in 2022; and support member States in integrating the Cairo Declaration into development planning and national reviews;

(m) Support member States in integrating migration issues in development planning, in line with the goals of the Global Compact for Migration and the 2030 Agenda;

(n) Conduct regional reviews to evaluate progress pursuant to paragraph 50 of the Global Compact for Migration, beginning in 2020 and every four years thereafter;

(o) Review progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after 25 years at the regional and national levels, in coordination with the Regional Office for the Arab States of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the League of Arab States, to support Arab States in conducting national and regional reviews;

(p) Continue coordinating with the International Organization for Migration and the League of Arab States through the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region; and advance knowledge creation, capacity-building and partnerships, including with other United Nations organizations, regional organizations and regional consultation processes, such as the Abu Dhabi Dialogue and the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration and Refugee Affairs;

(q) Work on incorporating member States' proposals in the proposed programme plan for the year 2020, in accordance with the Commission's mandate and available resources;

(r) Continue developing technical cooperation frameworks with member States and support stakeholders in formulating technical cooperation frameworks, especially focal points in the Technical Cooperation Network, in line with results-based development planning;

(s) Focus on training activities to build member States' capacity and on jointly evaluating those activities with beneficiaries, and document and disseminate successful experiences in collaboration with stakeholders in member States.

## **II. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION**

### **A. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT ITS FOURTH MEETING (Agenda item 3)**

7. The representative of the secretariat, with reference to document [E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/3](#), made a presentation on progress in the measures and activities undertaken by the secretariat pursuant to recommendations made by the Executive Committee at its fourth meeting (Beirut, 13-14 December 2017). He gave an overview of the recommendations and the measures taken to implement them. He said that ESCWA had offered 77 training sessions in 2018, some funded from the regular budget and others from extrabudgetary

sources, in response to a recommendation requesting more training programmes for member States. He underscored the strong and growing collaboration with the League of Arab States, adding that ESCWA was committed to its development, especially with regard to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He said that the secretariat was working with several member States to adapt the ESCWA multidimensional poverty index to the national level by providing technical support. It was also reviewing the methodology employed in the first Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report, taking into account comments from member States.

8. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Oman thanked ESCWA for its efforts, noting the significant number of training sessions provided, and stressing the need to develop mechanisms to assess how member States benefited from them. The representative of Morocco also thanked ESCWA for its efforts in implementing the recommendations, and asked whether ESCWA employed a method to measure training outcomes. The representative of Egypt confirmed the importance of benefitting from training sessions provided by ESCWA, indicating the need to prepare a guide on successful experiences in training sessions, which Arab countries could benefit from given their similar situations. The representative of Tunisia noted countries' responsibility to follow up with persons receiving training.

9. The representative of the State of Palestine addressed the relationship between ESCWA and the League of Arab States, expressing his surprise that separate reports on sustainable development were being presented by the organizations although they were both concerned with the same region. He asked whether there were plans to publish a unified report by the two organizations. He also referred to the Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report issued by ESCWA, noting that the State of Palestine would not be included therein because the methodology used to measure poverty was not applicable to its situation. He enquired about the added value of holding Statistical Committee sessions with those of other subsidiary bodies, clarifying that joint sessions should not be limited to the Statistical Committee but should also involve all other ESCWA committees, while taking into account the integration dimension when discussing development challenges in those joint meetings.

10. The representative of Saudi Arabia stressed the importance of integration between the ESCWA report and that of the League of Arab States, given that each report would cover topics from different perspectives through effort coordination. The representative of Yemen said that available reconstruction programmes were insufficient, and that they should include other dimensions such as displaced persons. He stressed the need to curb and tackle capital migration and brain drain, especially in view of the collapse of departments and institutions in war-torn countries. The representative of Iraq said that her country was developing a survey on the economic cost of violence against women to prepare for a report on that issue, and asked whether Iraq could send the questionnaire to ESCWA for review.

11. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that ESCWA had standards and tools to measure the durability and benefit of programmes. It was necessary to clearly establish the reasons for conducting training, which were improving individuals' competencies and comprehensively institutionalizing them. ESCWA had developed evaluation and follow-up tools, but it was possible to consider conducting a joint evaluation of those programmes between recipient countries and the secretariat. She focused on linking capacity-building activities with ESCWA normative work, namely research and technical studies, stressing that increased understanding of technical cooperation's contribution to implementing ESCWA programmes would increase member State's interest in evaluation.

12. The representative of the secretariat stressed that subsidiary bodies' work on specific topics did not detract from an integrated approach, but rather complemented it. Regarding calculating multidimensional poverty, he said that ESCWA was reviewing the methodology employed in defining poverty dimensions. He confirmed support for joint work with the League of Arab States, indicating that ESCWA and League's reports derived their information from the same sources, namely United Nations data. Concerning Yemen, he said that ESCWA had an integrated and continuing reconstruction programme at the national level rather than the regional level. Regarding Iraq, he said that the secretariat was prepared to review the questionnaire.

B. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIRUT CONSENSUS ON TECHNOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB REGION AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED  
AT THE THIRTIETH ESCWA SESSION  
(Agenda item 4)

13. The representative of the secretariat, with reference to document E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/4, made a presentation on the measures undertaken by the secretariat pursuant to the Beirut Consensus, and those undertaken pursuant to resolutions adopted by ESCWA at its thirtieth session (Beirut, 25-28 June 2018). The presentation covered current or proposed measures to implement the Beirut Consensus in the context of points raised by member States for consideration by the ESCWA secretariat. Those measures included implementing regional initiatives aimed at supporting member States' efforts in keeping pace with rapid technological developments, preparing various reports and studies on technology's role in achieving structural development transformations, holding expert group meetings, providing technological tools to assist decision makers and planners in developing evidence-based policies, preparing varied information material to increase awareness of advanced technologies' role in sustainable development, formulating guidelines for policies on technology transfer, development and use at the national level, promoting the role of the ESCWA Technology Centre in bridging legislative and regulatory gaps, enhancing the transfer and adaptation of green technology and broadening its scope of use, and promoting the work of the regional communication network of national technology transfer offices in several Arab countries.

14. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Oman said that it was necessary to set a timeframe for implementing resolutions and related activities, and to develop rules and standards for measuring progress in implementation. The representative of the State of Palestine asked whether those plans and declarations would be completed in a set timeframe, and whether they required other activities to assist their implementation. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic said that the Beirut Consensus called for the lifting of unilateral sanctions on the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic, and that the presentation had not mentioned that point. The representative of Saudi Arabia said that it was essential to resort to national sources to supplement United Nations data, and that her country was prepared to provide necessary data to ESCWA. The representative of Morocco said that her country was also prepared to provide necessary data to ESCWA. The representative of the Sudan enquired about the possibility of developing mechanisms to receive technological support directly rather than by States submitting requests.

15. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that it was necessary to avoid duplication in data and calculations, and that ESCWA used those data for purposes other than those of national bodies, such as calculating indicators, especially data on the SDGs. Regarding the proposed activities to implement the Beirut Consensus, and its additional activities, he said that activities were conducted in accordance with ESCWA resources and mandates, and that it was essential to develop better implementation mechanisms. He stressed that success in adopting and implementing consensus and agreements stemmed from commitment to their implementation. He proposed that the secretariat prepare a matrix to follow up on the implementation of the Beirut Consensus, and send the matrix to member States for reference when submitting reports on progress in implementation. Concerning the call to lift unilateral sanctions, he said that it expressed the will of member States and did not entail implementation measures to be undertaken by the secretariat.

C. FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT: PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE ADDIS ABABA  
ACTION AGENDA IN THE ARAB REGION  
(Agenda item 5)

16. Under this item, the representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/5 on assessing from a regional perspective the outcomes of and recommendations on financing for development and implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. He noted the progress achieved by the Arab region in financing sustainable development, but stressed that the region faced a difficult situation because of a drop in financing development that was causing the region to continually lose opportunities in that area. ESCWA had conducted a comprehensive assessment



which found that for every \$1 entering the region from various financing sources, \$2.5 left the region. Concerning the mobilization of domestic resources, he said that it was vital to assess tax revenue received by expanding the tax base, which could increase the region's gross domestic product (GDP) by 2 per cent. However, he warned that calls for financing development by expanding the tax base did not take into account the potential insatiability and strengthening of the informal economy that it could yield.

17. He said that ESCWA had proposed a different approach based on reducing tax evasion by multinational companies that manipulate commercial contracts, especially in view of indicators showing that current foreign direct investment was not increasing value and productivity in the region. The region was investing \$1.8 abroad for every \$1 invested within, and no international mechanism existed to curb those flows and recover lost assets. Regarding international public finance, he stressed that, despite increases, it was being channelled towards purposes that were a far cry from their original objective, such as costs of hosting refugees in donor countries and debt relief frameworks. He expressed concern about selectivity in international trade analysis and related measures, and said that a large share of exports from the Arab region was subjected to trade protectionism, thus making it vulnerable to deteriorating terms of trade. He addressed the various activities undertaken by ESCWA in the field of financing for development, especially in supporting the Egyptian chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China, such as providing proposals and analyses to protect the Arab region's interests in financing for development at the global and regional levels, issuing publications and reports on public policies, preparing background documents and analytical summaries, and providing technical cooperation activities and advisory services.

18. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Egypt thanked the secretariat for its presentation. He noted the Egyptian chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China in the current year and its Palestinian chairmanship in the next year, indicating that it was the first time that Arab States would lead the Group for two consecutive years. He enquired about the mechanism for calculating financial inflows and outflows in the region, and stressed the need to provide the team working on financing for development with more human resources. The representative of Yemen focused on the risk of capital outflows from the region, expressing concern that the phenomenon had not been sufficiently studied to ascertain whether recent developments in the region were the reason for the current situation or whether it was the result of inherent structural problems. The representative of Morocco warned about overreliance on taxes to resolve financing for development issues, because tax increases weakened the financial capacity of a wide segment of Arab society. She welcomed the contents of the document on public-private partnerships, stressing the need to encourage them. The representative of Jordan expressed his surprise that financing for development was sometimes tackled in isolation from countries' political stability, stressing that tax increases could negatively impact stability. The representative of the State of Palestine underscored the need to take into account country specificities and assess country capacity to finance development, indicating the special case of the State of Palestine in that regard. He requested that ESCWA support countries in financing development at the national level.

19. The representative of Saudi Arabia enquired about measuring financing for development. She requested that the secretariat build the capacity of member States which provided development assistance, including Saudi Arabia, to increase their capacity to link that assistance to the SDGs. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic said that regional circumstances were impacting development and that financing for development should be considered from an integrated perspective, but each State should also have its own vision in line with its priorities and challenges. The representative of the Sudan said that sanctions had burdened development financing in his country, especially in commercial sectors where imports were costly, and that production costs had also increased. The representative of Mauritania asked whether there was causality between financial inflows and outflows in the region.

20. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that it was necessary to adapt the regional approach to national specificities, if a country so requested. Disparities in countries' situations required that each country identify its priorities so ESCWA could assist. Regarding the risk of taxes on stability, he said that the document presented to the Executive Committee covered that issue in detail, and that the middle ground between completely relying on development assistance and increasing taxes was to curb illicit financial flows in

cooperation with receiving countries. He said that the reasons behind capital outflows from the region were a combination of structural weaknesses and regional circumstances, stressing the need to unify positions and follow an integrated approach to tackle the phenomenon. He said that the proposed solutions indicated the need for Arab economic and social integration, with Governments adopting a suitable policy mix and ESCWA developing data on expanding the tax base and on illicit financial flows. He added that financing for development was the region's responsibility and that it could not rely only on donor countries. He proposed developing a project to produce comprehensive research on financing sustainable development, which would form a starting point for each country's requirements. He mentioned the issue of corruption that was depriving the region from significant development opportunities.

D. ARAB REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DATA:  
PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION  
(Agenda item 6)

21. With reference to document [E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/6](#), the representative of the secretariat made a presentation on progress in implementing the Arab Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data adopted by the ESCWA Statistical Committee at its twelfth session (Beirut, 4-5 April 2017). The presentation covered the various strategic areas in the Action Plan, and activities undertaken by the secretariat to implement those areas, especially strengthening coordination between agencies in the region. He reviewed the second meeting of the Arab Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators, at which participants had agreed to develop a list of implemented, current and proposed statistical activities since 2016, and to periodically update it as a key tool to coordinate statistical activities at the regional level. He listed ESCWA cooperation activities with global and international statistical bodies, such as Paris21, the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Statistical Office of the European Union, aimed at evaluating the readiness of national statistical systems in interested countries. He added that the evaluation had been completed in Egypt and Jordan.

22. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Tunisia said that it was necessary to forge partnerships between ESCWA and national statistical bodies, and to tackle weaknesses in producing statistics in Arab countries where they were often incomplete and inaccurate. He expressed his hope that integration would be achieved through the ESCWA data portal. The representative of Saudi Arabia reconfirmed that it was vital to coordinate with Governments to ensure information accuracy before dissemination. The representative of Iraq said that it was preferable to coordinate with regional organizations because national administrative registers were often inaccurate. She requested that ESCWA provide technical support to Iraq on SDG indicators, especially tier III indicators.

23. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that ESCWA always seriously considered forging partnerships and did not undertake activities unilaterally. He addressed the issue of national data in relation to regional or international data, stating that all data came from individuals so national statistics were the fundamental source, and that international organizations collaborated with national statistical offices in their work. He said that there were differences in defining some concepts, such as poverty and migration, between international approaches that aimed to reconcile and balance country needs and national approaches that took into account national priorities.

E. PALESTINIAN ECONOMY UNDER THE OCCUPATION: THE CASE OF THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR  
(Agenda item 7)

24. The representative of the secretariat, with reference to document [E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/7](#), made a presentation on the Palestinian economy under the occupation, focusing on the industrial sector's significant capacity to drive development in the State of Palestine and on the challenges it faced that stemmed from the occupation and its policies. He noted the Israeli policies that affected the Palestinian economy, which could be divided over two periods. The first extended from 1967 to 1994, when Israel had taken complete control of development and economic policies and had tied the Palestinian economy to the Israeli economy to provide an

additional and less costly source for Israeli economic inputs. In the occupied Palestinian territory, Israel had imposed austerity measures on development expenditure, limited production activities to inputs from Israeli industries, reduced the legal rights of Palestinian workers, and imposed an unbalanced customs system. The second period followed the 1994 Protocol on Economic Relations, when Israel had continued its dependency policies by adopting measures that prohibited the exchange of non-Israeli currencies, controlling foreign trade routes, collecting revenue on behalf of Palestinians, prohibiting infrastructure development and destroying existing infrastructure, and preventing Palestinians from accessing economic inputs.

25. He then reviewed the current status of the Palestinian economy using macroeconomic indicators. He said that economic growth was volatile, with dwindling contributions from agriculture and industry to GDP compared with the services sector. The blockade of the Gaza Strip was the biggest obstacle to growth and economic diversification. The State of Palestine was facing a considerable trade deficit, with exports to Israel constituting the largest share of total exports compared with weak exports to other Arab countries. Unemployment was extremely high because of limited opportunities. Tax revenues contributed to a small and stagnant share of GDP, and official development assistance, constantly under threat from political tensions, made up a large share of the Palestinian Government's revenues.

26. He also considered Palestinian industrial policies, focusing on the potential of some sectors and industrial activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, especially mineral products and Palestinian quarries, indicating that most of the revenue from those sectors was transferred to Israel so Palestinians did not benefit from it. Israeli policies had thwarted the potential of the Palestinian agricultural sector and hindered its links to higher-value agricultural activities. He reviewed the obstacles and challenges facing economic zones and industrial complexes, including the absence of a clear, proactive and feasible manufacturing strategy and the Palestinian Government's limited capacity to oversee economic restructuring. He concluded that obstacles caused by Israeli policies were the main reason behind restricted Palestinian capacity to build an economy that met Palestinian needs, and the near-absolute dependency of the economy on Israel. He added that there were no signs of real change, which raised the question of whether it was truly possible to build a strong and sustainable Palestinian economy.

27. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Oman reconfirmed his country's solidarity with the Palestinian people, condemning the occupation's measures that impacted the Palestinian economy and expressing his support for ESCWA work in that regard. The representative of the State of Palestine thanked the secretariat for its support and monitoring of Israeli practices at international forums, stressing the importance of the ESCWA programme to study the cumulative impact of the occupation on the Palestinian people despite challenges in securing resources for that programme.

F. CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE ARAB REGION: RELEVANT REGIONAL  
AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS  
(Agenda item 8)

28. The representative of the secretariat, with reference to document E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/8, made a presentation on regional and international developments related to climate change issues in the Arab region. She noted ESCWA contributions to climate change negotiations, its support to the International Conference on Adaptation Metrics and Techniques for Water, Agriculture and Resilient Cities (Benguerir, Morocco, 26-27 October 2018), the provision of advanced training sessions on adaptation metrics and techniques in water and agriculture, and a presentation on RICCAR outputs. She discussed the eleventh regional training session (Cairo, November 2018) held by ESCWA to build Arab countries' capacity in climate change negotiations, as part of preparatory work for the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties. She also discussed the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies, clarifying its goals and key activities, such as participating in launching the e-platform on climate change of the Regional Knowledge Hub, publishing the Water Development Report No. 7, and participating in several forums, projects and meetings, including implementing the United Nations Development Account project on increasing energy efficiency in the housing and services sectors in the Arab region. The Centre also undertook activities to mobilize resources and forge

partnerships, such as holding meetings with various potential partners and donors. She listed ESCWA future activities in the field of climate change, including preparing for the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the 2019 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, to be held in Beirut in April 2019; offering continued support to member States through the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies and the programme of work; and periodically providing analyses and presentations on activities at intergovernmental meetings to be held in 2019.

29. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Morocco requested that ESCWA stress in its reports the need to standardize existing measures adopted by donor institutions and increase the financing ceiling to reach the annual goal of \$100 billion, as stated in the Paris Agreement. She also requested that ESCWA participate in providing technical assistance in the area of climate change adaptation policies. Participants agreed to continue benefiting from the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies' analyses, outcomes, recommendations and services in the field of climate change, and refer to them when preparing policies, strategies, reports and research at the regional and national levels.

G. ARAB REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT:  
FIVE YEARS AFTER THE 2013 CAIRO DECLARATION  
(Agenda item 9)

30. The representative of the secretariat, with reference to document E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/9, presented a report entitled "Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development: five years after the 2013 Cairo Declaration". She discussed the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, which constituted a qualitative leap in the concept of development. The Conference adopted an unprecedented rights-based approach and enshrined development as a right for all social groups, including vulnerable groups such as women, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities and migrants. She considered the 2013 Cairo Declaration that emanated from the +20 review of the Conference, organized by ESCWA in partnership and collaboration with several regional and international organizations, which reconfirmed Arab States' commitment to the Programme of Action beyond 2014 of the International Conference on Population and Development.

31. She discussed the Arab Regional Conference of Population and Development (Beirut, 30 October - 1 November 2018), organized by ESCWA in collaboration with several organizations, aimed at conducting a five-year review of the Cairo Declaration. At the Conference, 14 Arab States presented their voluntary national reviews, which contributed to identifying priorities, trends and emerging issues in the region, so as to review interlinkages and integration between the 2013 Cairo Declaration and the 2030 Agenda and consider their means of implementation. She considered the key messages emanating from the Conference, especially regarding population policies and development planning, ensuring a healthy life for all, migration and environmental sustainability, and mobilizing means of implementation and follow-up mechanisms. She said that those key messages would be submitted to the Commission on Population and Development at its fifty-second session, and that a high-level session would be organized on the sidelines of the meeting to share the outcomes of regional reviews of the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in April 2019. The report and key messages of the Arab Regional Conference would also be submitted to the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, to be held in New York in July 2019 on the theme "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality". She added that it would be necessary in the future to coordinate the review of the 2013 Cairo Declaration with the review of the 2030 Agenda that would take place every four years, to ensure that the outcomes of the Cairo Declaration review informed the 2030 Agenda review.

32. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Iraq said that it was important to empower young people and benefit from their capacity, and to meet the needs of older persons whom Iraq was striving to integrate economically and benefit from their expertise. It was also vital to involve all social groups in the economy to achieve integrated development. She also discussed the shift among international organizations from providing assistance through development programmes to doing so through humanitarian programmes.

33. The representative of the State of Palestine said that regional reporting had not been clear and enquired about the delay in completing the regional report. He said that the Cairo Declaration lacked a follow-up framework, which had impeded progress in its implementation. He expressed concern that four-year reviews were insufficient to guarantee implementation. He requested the development of an implementation framework to facilitate procedures in the region, stating that the timeframes in the Declaration required further consideration. The representative of the Sudan said that weak focus on young people led to problems with migration and extremism. He called on Arab States to provide means for their integration in all development plans.

34. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that several bodies would participate in preparing the regional report, and that it would be disseminated to States in early 2019. She added that the United Nations Population Fund had a global monitoring framework with several indicators to follow up on the implementation of the Cairo Declaration.

H. SUPPORTING ARAB STATES IN THE PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING  
THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION  
25 YEARS AFTER THEIR ADOPTION  
(Agenda item 10)

35. With reference to document E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/10, the representative of the secretariat made a presentation on activities provided by ESCWA to support Arab countries in the area of gender equality. She said that ESCWA was working in that regard with all Arab States, members and non-members. After summarizing the dimensions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, she said that ESCWA had a long history of supporting Arab States in national reviews and of presenting regional reviews, by employing a participatory approach between State representatives, civil society and experts. ESCWA activities had resulted in an integrated work programme for reviewing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 20 years after their adoption in 2014, and had contributed to its implementation. The outcomes of the review had provided Arab States with a clear road map to move towards achieving gender equality by 2030. She discussed proposed activities for reviewing progress in the Arab region, including holding a workshop for representatives of national women's machineries, a workshop with civil society to discuss progress in women's advancement, an expert group meeting to review the Arab consolidated report on Beijing+25, and a high-level conference to discuss the Arab consolidated report.

36. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Morocco said that her country had conducted consultations with national women's machineries, and requested delaying the submission date for national reviews. She requested that ESCWA provide the civil society components that would be participating in a workshop to be held in April 2019, and assist member States in preparing their national reviews. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic seconded the statement by the representative of Morocco on civil society components, and requested that ESCWA identify the mechanism that it would use to select civil society representatives and indicate how it would coordinate with the Syrian Government in that regard. The representative of the State of Palestine enquired about the working mechanism with other organizations involved in women's rights in the region. He said that sustainable development processes had been expected to reduce the burden of multiple reporting channels for States by submitting reports under a standardized and integrated framework. It was vital to benefit from previous reports to avoid repetition, and to review unimplemented items. It was also necessary to translate conference outcomes into effective and realistic measures to achieve goals, especially in the context of supporting women in Arab countries. He expressed his hope that the State of Palestine would manage to contribute to the current report, since it was unable to significantly contribute to the Beijing+20 report because of a lack of data.

37. The representative of Oman supported the statement by the representative of the State of Palestine on the burden caused by multiple reports. He enquired about the difference between the Beijing Declaration and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which covered several aspects of the Declaration. He asked whether ESCWA had conducted studies that measured the cost of weak women's participation in economic activities; if they did not exist, they should be added to the work

programme. The representative of the Sudan noted the importance of empowering women and achieving gender equality, indicating that economies with high women's participation were healthy. He asked whether ESCWA programmes reached rural areas and villages, where women suffered from greater marginalization than in other areas. He requested that the issue be focused on because women in rural areas needed more support in terms of awareness, education and employment. The representative of Iraq requested increased focus on women affected by conflict and on providing them with psychological support. The representative of Yemen said that the discussion had not covered the impact of the transformations taking place in the region on women's issues, especially regarding empowerment and education in war-torn countries, where conflict had affected the situation of women and had eroded many of their rights. He expressed his hope that ESCWA would organize some activities in that regard, and prepare related reports.

38. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that the mechanisms adopted by ESCWA in selecting civil society representatives were United Nations mechanisms. The deadlines for submitting reports were linked to the deadline for presenting the regional report at the international level. She stressed the strong relationship between ESCWA and other organizations working in the region, especially UN-Women and the League of Arab States, with which it collaborated in organizing and managing workshops. Those organizations had requested that ESCWA lead programmes in the region. Regarding the burden of report submission, she said that ESCWA highlighted for member States the intersections between those frameworks and the SDGs and how to integrate issues. Since those frameworks covered various aspects, it was necessary to issue varied reports. Consequently, ESCWA encouraged member States to adopt creative approaches to data collection for the report. She said that ESCWA was limited in terms of national interventions; however, it had collaborated with the Directorate of Women's Affairs in Oman to discuss women's participation in the economy. She was hoping to include the issues in the agenda of the next meeting, and had dedicated a whole programme to the issues of women affected by conflict.

I. GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION  
AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE ARAB REGION  
(Agenda item 11)

39. The representative of the secretariat, with reference to document E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/11, made a presentation on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which was adopted in Marrakesh, Morocco, on 10 and 11 December 2018. She discussed the phases of developing the non-binding Compact for Migration, namely consultations, stocktaking, intergovernmental negotiations, and developing the final draft on 13 July 2018. The final draft was presented to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session held in September 2018.

40. She gave an overview of the text of the Global Compact for Migration and its various parts. She also discussed its importance for the Arab region and for ESCWA activities related to the preparatory process, especially the Regional Consultation on International Migration that had provided an opportunity to discuss key issues and priorities related to migration in the Arab region. She said that ESCWA was committed to continuing its partnership with the International Organization for Migration and the League of Arab States in leading the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region. She reviewed ESCWA efforts to support member States in formulating policies and coordinating action in various fields, namely institutional capacity and readiness, central coordination, enhancing ownership in all sectors related to migration, mainstreaming a whole-of-government approach, whole-of-society considerations, and adequate and detailed data for evidence-based decision-making.

41. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Tunisia confirmed the importance of the Global Compact for Migration and expressed his disappointment that it was non-binding, which could weaken it. The representative of Morocco welcomed the Global Compact for Migration. She said that Morocco was a pioneer and a role model in the field of migration because its migration policies were underpinned primarily by a human dimension and solidarity in dealing with the phenomenon. She discussed the initiative of King Mohammed VI to establish an African migration observatory, which was approved at the thirty-first Ordinary

Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (Nouakchott, 1-2 July 2018). She said that it was vital to develop more flexible public policies on migration, and to encourage regional and international cooperation and take measures to effectively implement the Global Compact for Migration.

42. The representative of Iraq discussed the issue of data, stating that Iraq did not possess a database on migrants. The Government had conducted an online survey to collect data, but the response rate had been low. She asked how ESCWA could support Iraq in collecting data on migrants. The representative of Yemen asked why the Global Compact for Migration was non-binding, and why some countries had withdrawn from it. The representative of Egypt enquired about implementing a non-binding global agreement at the regional level, and its added value given that it was non-binding. He invited ESCWA to coordinate with member States in that area, stressing the security dimension of migration in several Arab countries, especially regarding terrorism and its impact on development, and requested that the issue be considered in ESCWA studies. The representative of Tunisia said that he shared the concerns of the representative of Egypt, stating that Tunisia was facing the same challenge, especially with its northern partners. The representative of Oman expressed his hope that ESCWA would play a key role in States' national reviews and in representing the region at international forums, stressing the need to build capacity in member States because the issue was new and that dealing with it required training and expertise.

43. The representative of the State of Palestine said that his country had been witnessing forced displacement for 70 years and that the Global Compact for Migration could constitute a general guidance framework, stressing that it was vital for it to reach the national level to optimize its benefits. He said that the secretariat's presentation had not clarified whether the reviews would be regional or national, underscoring the importance of national reviews in that regard. The representative of Jordan said that it was necessary to benefit from migrants in reconstruction efforts. The representative of Yemen said that his country did not possess a complete database of migrants, which hampered its ability to assist them, provide services and benefit from them. He proposed that ESCWA assist war-torn countries in studying the issue. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic said that migration was a priority for the Syrian Government, which was working on repatriating displaced persons. She expressed her hope that ESCWA would play a key role in coordinating with the Syrian Government to prepare studies on repatriating displaced persons and reintegrating them in society, and on mechanisms to benefit from Syrian migrants in reconstruction efforts. The representative of the Sudan said that his country was a transit point for migrants, which had negatively affected the economy, especially since the international community had not fully fulfilled its commitments to resolve migration issues in the Sudan.

44. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that the African migration observatory was the first of its kind in collecting African data. She discussed the database on the Iraqi diaspora and ESCWA assistance in that regard, stating that the issue was still under consideration with the Statistics Division. Regarding the non-binding nature of the Global Compact for Migration, disparities between countries complicated reaching an agreement that balanced between country interests and migrant rights. Concerns about not reaching that balance had led to a non-binding agreement, although the text did strike a balance, including from a security perspective. The non-binding nature of the Global Compact for Migration did not weaken it; the 2030 Agenda was also non-binding but enjoyed significant interest and momentum in its implementation. She said that ESCWA was still coordinating with global organizations regarding regional reviews, and that it was not possible to achieve a regional review without national reviews.

#### J. PROPOSED PROGRAMME PLAN FOR THE YEAR 2020 (Agenda item 12)

45. The Acting Executive Secretary of ESCWA, Mr. Mounir Tabet, with reference to document E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/12, made a presentation on the proposed programme plan for 2020. He said that most war-torn countries had suffered significant de-development, thus requiring ESCWA to double its efforts. The global economy was growing at a rapid rate, and fundamentally depended on technology, information and innovation. He said that it was vital to employ young people's capacity in the development process and develop

frameworks to facilitate their access to technology. Dialogue was essential in reconstruction efforts to ensure inclusivity. Terrorism posed an existential threat to the region's identity and culture, and positive development thinking must supplant extremism. He said that the programme plan was part of a five-year strategic framework that ESCWA was preparing. He discussed United Nations reforms, and thanked member States for their continued support of ESCWA.

46. The Acting Deputy Executive Secretary, Ms. Roula Majdalani, discussed interlinkages in the programme plan and its alignment with country needs. She said that the repetition of some issues across the seven subprogrammes was inevitable given that they were cross-sectoral issues, including strengthening institutions, creating employment opportunities, achieving balanced development, managing natural resources, ensuring gender quality, and benefiting from technology in achieving development. The representatives of the secretariat gave an overview of the subprogrammes and reviewed key projects and expected achievements in each.

47. The representative of Tunisia commended the significant role played by ESCWA in providing services to member States and representing the region at international events. He said that member States were committed to defending the ESCWA budget at United Nations meetings in New York. The representative of Mauritania asked whether current United Nations reforms would impact cooperation with member States and about the mechanisms to inform countries of those impacts, if any, so they could deal with them. He added that the secretariat's presentation had not included information on the budget. He requested that Mauritania be included among countries that welcomed refugees, because it was hosting over 50,000 refugees from Mali. The representative of Jordan noted the consistency between ESCWA programmes and member States' national goals, stating that building statistical capacity should be a priority.

48. The representative of Morocco praised the work of ESCWA, stating that the proposed programme plan reflected the needs and aspirations of her country. She said that Morocco wanted to work with ESCWA on projects to enhance agricultural sustainability and energy efficiency. She requested more time for member States to consider the programme plan with all ministries involved. The representative of the State of Palestine said that the programme plan was more a strategic document than a programme, and enquired about the standards that would be adopted to assess its success at the end of 2020. He stressed that it was vital to accomplish tangible achievements regarding safe migration. He expressed his hope that ESCWA would play a bigger role in assisting member States to achieve the SDGs and in developing clearer standards to ensure the success of work on women's rights. He enquired about the status of the decision to establish a Palestine unit under ESCWA subprogramme 7 and the reasons for the delay. He requested enhancing the role of the 2030 Agenda Unit and increasing its support to member States, expressing his reservations about the number of activities it was responsible for given that it was only organizing the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development every year and preparing a regional report once every four years.

49. The representative of the Sudan invited ESCWA to conduct a study to assist Arab States in unifying their position and increasing integration regarding the world trade system. The representative of Yemen requested that ESCWA further support the shift towards alternative energy, especially in countries undergoing transition, and that a recommendation be included on supporting the use of alternative energy. With reference to the subprogramme on statistics, he said that war-torn countries might be obliged to rebuild their statistical systems, and requested assistance to that end through more realistic options. The representative of Saudi Arabia asked whether the current draft of the programme plan was final or was open to discussion. She said that it was vital to integrate ESCWA work with that of other United Nations organizations to avoid duplication. She requested that SDG 16 be added to the list of SDGs under subprogramme 5 on statistics for evidence-based policymaking, alongside SDG 17. She added that employment studies should not focus solely on job creation but also on their sustainability.

50. The representative of the secretariat said that the budget was not presented to member States at ESCWA Executive Committee meetings but was negotiated at meetings of relevant United Nations committees. The aim of the present item was to discuss priorities and related demands and agree on proposed activities, whose implementation was predicated on resource availability and ESCWA mandates. Partnerships with other United



Nations organizations and regional organizations was a key factor in ESCWA work. Regarding the implementation mechanism, he said that the Executive Committee was reviewing it for completion by other subsidiary bodies. Each subprogramme was linked to one or more SDGs, and ESCWA was developing a strategy that connected all SDGs. The main aim of ESCWA was to work at the regional level because regional work was a service to member States. He said that the relationship with the League of Arab States was vital and important to both parties, and that coordination existed between the two organizations, but they had different working mechanisms, especially in producing reports. ESCWA wanted to increase support to member States and improve the quality of its services, despite limited resources. He highlighted ESCWA work in the field of climate change and the programme it had developed on best agricultural practices to achieve sustainable agriculture. ESCWA was currently exploring ways to ensure social protection for workers in the informal sector. He added that country requests would be reflected in studies, and that ESCWA possessed mechanisms and models for forecasting. The project for a Palestine unit had been drafted and extrabudgetary financing sources were currently under consideration.

#### K. TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES FOR 2018 (Agenda item 13)

51. The representative of the secretariat, with reference to document E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/13, reviewed progress in implementing technical cooperation activities undertaken by ESCWA in 2018. She gave an overview of RPTC, stating that it was a key part of ESCWA work that responded to country needs based on their requests. ESCWA provided technical cooperation services at the regional and national levels. At the regional level, it addressed transnational challenges and opportunities. At the national level, it supported institutions and human capacity-building. ESCWA had recently signed four technical cooperation frameworks with Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco and the Syrian Arab Republic, and was currently developing five other frameworks. She listed key technical cooperation achievements in 2018, including an initiative to establish a public expenditure observatory for the social sector that was currently being implemented in Jordan and Tunisia and was being discussed in Kuwait. She noted that the Technical Cooperation Network had met in December 2018. It had made recommendations on strengthening cooperation with training institutes in member States to build national capacity, and on promoting the network's work in knowledge exchange and joint activities between its members.

52. The representative of Kuwait requested a national working group to develop technical cooperation activities between her country and ESCWA. She said that Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries shared common issues that could be transformed into tailored projects. The representatives of Qatar and Saudi Arabia seconded the statement by the representative of Kuwait on the specificities of GCC countries, especially since what those countries expected from ESCWA differed from other countries' expectations. Most topics covered by ESCWA concerned those other countries. The representative of Iraq said that war-torn countries also had specificities and should be dealt with on that basis.

53. The representative of the State of Palestine asked why 80 per cent of ESCWA services were concentrated in only three subprogrammes.

54. The representative of Morocco said that it was important to go through official focal points in member States when conducting technical cooperation activities. It was also vital to review and evaluate the technical cooperation framework between ESCWA and Morocco by developing a methodology to measure expected outcomes before establishing a new framework, so as to avoid any shortfalls. The representative of Tunisia confirmed the importance of coordinating with national focal points. The representative of Yemen noted the methodology of technical cooperation frameworks, and proposed that it should not be limited to workshops but should also include the exchange of successful experiences related to preparing new cooperation frameworks, and the development of a mechanism to evaluate a framework following its implementation. The representative of Yemen proposed that ESCWA conduct field missions to directly network with focal points. The representative of the Sudan said that the success of networking with focal points required coordination within countries. He requested that the secretariat provide clearer information on communication and on

accessing ESCWA advisory reports and studies, and upload all scientific material and successful experiences to the ESCWA website.

55. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that coordination with focal points required efforts from ESCWA and member States. RPTC activities combined practical and normative efforts, which optimized the benefits provided by RPTC. Success was reflected in the effectiveness of the work and in strengthening cooperation frameworks. She said that ESCWA was undertaking activities at the bloc level. It had developed programmes for GCC countries that included studies on energy efficiency, a study on joint water resources in Kuwait, and capacity-building programmes to calculate the cost of violence against women. She welcomed avenues for further cooperation and noted the proposal to evaluate national cooperation frameworks, indicating that ESCWA documented successful programmes.

**L. DATE AND VENUE OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
(Agenda item 14)

56. Participants agreed that the sixth meeting of the Executive Committee would be held in Marrakesh, Morocco, in the third week of June 2019. The secretariat would liaise with Morocco on logistical requirements and preparations to host the meeting.

**M. OTHER MATTERS**  
(Agenda item 15)

57. No issues were raised under this item.

**III. ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE AT ITS FIFTH MEETING**  
(Agenda item 16)

58. At the close of its fifth meeting, the Executive Committee adopted the recommendations submitted to it and made comments thereon. The amended recommendations would be incorporated in a comprehensive report on the work and outcomes of the Committee.

**IV. ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

**A. DATE AND VENUE**

59. The Executive Committee held its fifth meeting at the United Nations House in Beirut on 18 and 19 December 2018. Pursuant to its terms of reference, which stipulate that the Chair of the ESCWA session shall be designated to chair the Committee, the representative of Tunisia, in his capacity as Chair of the thirtieth session of ESCWA, was appointed Chair of the Committee. The representatives of Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic were designated as first and second vice-chairs, respectively, and the representative of the Sudan as Rapporteur.

**B. OPENING**

60. The Executive Committee opened its fifth meeting at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 18 December 2018 at the United Nations House in Beirut. The representative of Tunisia, Mr. Abdelhamid Gharbi, Director of Sustainable Development at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Chair of the fifth Executive Committee meeting, made a statement in which he reviewed the meeting's agenda that contained several important issues, including migration and climate change. He said that the meeting was being held at a time when serious events were taking place, such as the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and United Nations reforms, which highlighted the importance of ESCWA to member States given its supporting role in international resolutions and in representing the region.

61. The Acting Executive Secretary of ESCWA made a statement in which he welcomed participants and addressed the situation of Arab countries that, despite their development achievements, were facing serious challenges such as conflict, occupation and terrorism, in addition to increasing poverty, unemployment, inequality, marginalization, displacement and migration. He said that those challenges had destroyed years of development work. Countries had only limited options in distributing development resources and efforts, which required an innovative approach to problem solving. The current meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the region's needs, identify development priorities, consider the challenges that impeded those priorities and devise solutions. The aim of the meeting's agenda was to support member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda through constructive discussions and positive interactions.

62. After reviewing the topics of discussion, he said that ESCWA would continue supporting member States to move forward in its development plan, and would work hard and employ all its capacity to drive development in the region. ESCWA would also continue communicating the region's circumstances, needs and achievements to the world.

### C. PARTICIPANTS

63. The fifth meeting of the Executive Committee was attended by representatives of ESCWA member States. The list of participants is set out in annex I to the present report.

### D. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

64. The Executive Committee adopted the agenda of its fifth meeting as set out in document [E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/L.1](#). The agenda was adopted as follows:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Implementation of recommendations made by the Executive Committee at its fourth meeting.
4. Implementation of the Beirut Consensus on Technology for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region and resolutions adopted at the thirtieth ESCWA session.
5. Financing for development: progress in implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in the Arab region.
6. Arab Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data: progress in implementation.
7. Palestinian economy under the occupation: the case of the industrial sector.
8. Climate change in the Arab region: relevant regional and international developments.
9. Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development: five years after the 2013 Cairo Declaration.
10. Supporting Arab States in the periodic review of progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years after their adoption.
11. Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and its relevance to the Arab region.
12. Proposed programme plan for the year 2020.
13. Technical cooperation activities for 2018.

14. Date and venue of the sixth meeting of the Executive Committee.
  15. Other matters.
  16. Adoption of the recommendations made by the Executive Committee at its fifth meeting.
65. The Committee also adopted the proposed organization of work as set forth in document [E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/L.2](#).

## Annex I

### **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

#### Egypt

Mr. Omar Abu Aysh  
Assistant Foreign Minister of Regional and  
International Multilateral Economic Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

#### Iraq

Ms. Fawz Ahmad Muhammad Salih  
Chief of the Population Policy Section  
Human Development Department  
Ministry of Planning

#### Jordan

Mr. Malik Burayzat  
Arab Relations Manager  
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

#### Kuwait

Ms. Iman Ibrahim al-Haddad  
Chief of the International Organizations Section  
Ministry of Finance

Ms. Lulwa Nasser al-Assimi  
Economic Researcher  
Department of Economic Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

#### Lebanon

Ms. Caroline Ziadeh  
Department of International Organizations,  
Cultural Relations and Conferences  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants

Ms. Rina Hilweh  
Diplomatic Attaché  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants

Mr. Nizar Kadouh  
Diplomat  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants

#### Mauritania

Mr. Abbas Sila  
Director-General of Development Policies and  
Strategies  
Ministry of Economy and Finance

Mr. Mohamed Taqra  
Director of Strategy and Policy  
Department of Development Policies and  
Strategies  
Ministry of Economy and Finance

#### Morocco

Ms. Hannan al-Tozani  
Studies Administrator for the Head of Government  
Ministry Delegated to the Prime Minister in  
Charge of Public Affairs and Governance

#### Oman

Mr. Saeed bin Rashid Al Kotbi  
Director-General of the Social Sectors  
Supreme Council for Planning

Mr. Ali bin Saeed al-Jabiri  
International Affairs Specialist  
Supreme Council for Planning

#### State of Palestine

Mr. Mahmoud Ataya  
Managing Director  
Reform and Policy Priorities Unit  
Office of the Prime Minister

Mr. Muhammad Ibrahim Kabha  
Chief of the Administration Unit  
Office of the Prime Minister

#### Qatar

Ms. Hind Ali Khater  
Adviser  
International Cooperation Department  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### Saudi Arabia

Ms. Haifa bint Abdel Aziz Al Muqrin  
Assistant Under-Secretary for Sustainable  
Development Affairs  
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Majed al-Asfour  
Project Specialist  
Ministry of Economy and Planning

### Sudan

Mr. Issa Tartib Shater Adam  
Director of Bilateral Cooperation and Conventions  
Ministry of Industry and Trade

Mr. Omar Mustafa Hassan Ahmed  
ESCWA Administrator  
Ministry of Industry and Trade

### Syrian Arab Republic

Ms. Thoraya Idlebi  
Deputy Head of the Planning and International  
Cooperation Commission  
Planning and International Cooperation  
Commission

Mr. Nader Sheikh Ali  
Director of Cooperation with International  
Organizations  
Planning and International Cooperation  
Commission

Mr. Abdul Razak Ismail  
First Secretary  
Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic in Lebanon

### Tunisia

Mr. Karim Boudali  
Ambassador Tunisia  
Embassy of Tunisia in Lebanon

Mr. Abdelhamid Gharbi  
Director of Sustainable Development  
Directorate-General for Multilateral Cooperation  
and Cross-cutting Issues  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Samir Sassi  
Consul  
Embassy of Tunisia in Lebanon

### Yemen

Mr. Muhammad Ahmad el-Hawiri  
Deputy Minister of Planning  
Economic Studies and Forecasts Sector  
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Ms. Amani Mohammed Abdullah Zabara  
Director-General for International Economic  
Studies  
Economic Studies and Forecasts Sector  
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Annex II

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

Title	Item	Symbol
Information note		E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/INF.1
Provisional agenda and annotations	2	E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/L.1
Organization of work	2	E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/L.2
Implementation of recommendations made by the Executive Committee at its fourth meeting	3	E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/3
Implementation of the Beirut Consensus on Technology for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region and resolutions adopted at the thirtieth ESCWA session	4	E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/4
Financing for development: progress in implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in the Arab region	5	E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/5
Arab Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data: progress in implementation	6	E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/6
Palestinian economy under the occupation: the case of the industrial sector	7	E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/7
Climate change in the Arab region: relevant regional and international developments	8	E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/8
Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development: five years after the 2013 Cairo Declaration	9	E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/9
Supporting Arab States in the periodic review of progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years after their adoption	10	E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/10
Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and its relevance to the Arab region	11	E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/11
Proposed programme plan for the year 2020	12	E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/12
Technical cooperation activities for 2018	13	E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/13
List of documents		E/ESCWA/EC.5/2018/INF.2