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**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON THE
ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION**

FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE COMMISSION

(vii) Commission resolution 140(XII)

On the filling of vacancies in the secretariat

(vii) Resolution 140(XII) The filling of vacancies in the secretariat

1. With reference to ESCWA resolution 140(XII), and in particular to its third preambular paragraph, an effort was made during the year to fill the professional vacancies in the secretariat. This effort has not yielded the hoped for results. As of 15 February 1986, the status of Professional vacancies in ESCWA was as follows:

(i) Vacant established posts subject to geographical distribution (substantive divisions only)	24, or 38 per cent
(ii) Vacant established posts subject to geographical distribution (non-substantive divisions)	6, or 19 per cent
(iii) Total established posts subject to geographical distribution which are vacant	30, or 32 per cent
(iv) Number of staff who joined ESCWA since 1 May 1985	9
(v) Number of staff who left ESCWA	12
(vi) Number of candidates scheduled to take up their duties with ESCWA	3
(vii) Number of staff recruited on short-term basis since 1 May 1985	9

2. With regard to the reasons for the failure to fill the vacant posts, among the reasons cited by candidates who turned down the secretariat's offers were the following:

- (i) The prevailing conditions in the region;
- (ii) The cost of living in relation to compensation.

3. The restrictions of geographical distribution continue to hamper regular ESCWA recruitment. The earmarking of 40 per cent of Professional posts for nationals of under- and unrepresented countries and of 25 per cent of the posts for female candidates tightens the restrictions. In this connection, the following facts should be noted once again:

- (i) The continuing scarcity of candidates from under- or unrepresented countries makes the restrictions on recruitment from fully represented countries of the region very difficult for ESCWA.

(ii) The efforts of the ESCWA secretariat to increase the number of staff members from the un- and underrepresented countries of the ESCWA region have not met with success. Two candidates from Qatar and Saudi Arabia respectively turned down offers at the last minute.

(iii) Despite repeated requests, the Governments of member States in the Gulf region have not nominated candidates for appointments with ESCWA on a secondment basis.

(iv) It is difficult to attract female candidates owing to the cultural constraints on single women living alone.

4. Although the situation described above is familiar from previous years, it cannot be accepted as immutable. The effort to arrive at a fully staffed establishment of qualified professionals is essential to the future of the Commission. This is a priority concern of the secretariat and the subject of intensive review. It should also be a focus of attention at the thirteenth session.

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