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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

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MANAGEMENT ISSUES**STREAMLINING THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION***Frequency of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies***Summary**

The Commission and its subsidiary bodies play the vital role of guiding and overseeing the work of the secretariat, as well as monitoring and facilitating multilateral dialogue, knowledge-sharing and networking among member countries and between member countries and the secretariat. Furthermore, they provide mandates,¹ which serve as the foundation for future programmes of work for the Commission.

At its twenty-fourth session (Beirut, 8-11 May 2006), the Commission considered the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) intergovernmental machinery in comparison with the machineries of other regional commissions.² While no decision was taken to revise the intergovernmental machinery of ESCWA, the Commission recognized the need to avoid lengthy intervals between its sessions and decided to form a technical committee, comprising focal points from member countries. It was expected that the Technical Committee would meet every six months to follow up on the implementation of the ESCWA programme of work and to assist in the mobilization of resources for proposed projects.³ The first meeting of the Technical Committee was held in Beirut on 16 and 17 January 2008.⁴

This document provides: (a) the current frequency of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies; (b) the challenges for ESCWA in responding to the emerging needs of member countries in the light of the ongoing United Nations reform in the field of development; (c) the latest intergovernmental machineries of other regional commissions and the frequency of their sessions; (d) key findings and the way forward for ESCWA; and (e) action required by the Commission.

¹ For the purposes of this document, a mandate is defined as a request or a direction for action by the secretariat, other implementing entities in the United Nations system, or member countries, which originates in a resolution of the Commission. Specific recommendations from the Committees often form the basis for Commission resolutions.

² Consideration of ESCWA intergovernmental machinery (E/ESCWA/24/6(Part I)/Add.2).

³ Report on the twenty-fourth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, para. 47. (E/ESCWA/24/10).

⁴ Report of the first meeting of the Technical Committee (E/ESCWA/2008/C.I/4).

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Introduction

1. As a regional arm of the United Nations, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia carries out analytical and normative work, building on its accumulated knowledge and multidisciplinary expertise, which are in turn supported by the provision of technical cooperation. It also facilitates multilateral dialogue, knowledge-sharing and networking on the outcome of the work of the Commission on national, regional and global development issues, taking into consideration the outcome of global meetings.⁵ Within the United Nations Development Framework, ESCWA highlights the regional dimension of development in Western Asia at key global meetings, including the annual sessions of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions.⁶
2. In this regard, the Commission and its subsidiary bodies play the vital role of guiding and overseeing the work of the secretariat, as well as facilitating multilateral dialogue, knowledge-sharing and networking among member countries and between member countries and the secretariat. Furthermore, they provide mandates, which serve as the foundation for future ESCWA programmes of work.
3. At its twenty-fourth session (Beirut, 8-11 May 2006), the Commission considered ESCWA intergovernmental machinery in comparison with the machineries of other regional commissions. While no decision was taken to revise its intergovernmental machinery, the Commission recognized the need to avoid lengthy intervals between its sessions and decided to form a technical committee, comprising the focal points of member countries. It was expected that the Technical Committee would meet every six months to follow up on the implementation of the ESCWA programme of work and to assist in the mobilization of resources for proposed projects. The first meeting of the Technical Committee was held in Beirut on 16 and 17 January 2008.
4. This document provides: (a) the current frequency of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies; (b) the challenges for ESCWA in responding to the emerging needs of member countries in light of the ongoing United Nations reform in the field of development; (c) the latest intergovernmental machineries of other regional commissions and the frequency of their sessions; (d) key findings and the way forward for ESCWA; and (e) action required by the Commission.

I. THE CURRENT FREQUENCY OF THE SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION AND ITS SUBSIDIARY INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES

5. The current intergovernmental structure of ESCWA has developed gradually since the establishment in 1992 of the Statistical Committee, which became the first intergovernmental body subsidiary to the Commission. In accordance with its terms of reference, the Commission remains the highest decision-making body. The seven current intergovernmental bodies subsidiary to the Commission⁷ deal with: (a) advancement of women; (b) energy; (c) liberalization of foreign trade and economic globalization; (d) social development; (e) statistics; (f) transport; and (g) water resources. The Commission and six of its committees meet biennially, the exception being the Committee on Transport, which convenes annually.
6. The frequency of the sessions of the Commission and the Committees was determined by a number of decisions made by the Commission between 1994 and 2003. In 1994, the Commission decided that its

⁵ Draft strategic framework for the biennium 2010-2011 (E/ESCWA/25/6(Part III)).

⁶ The functional commissions subsidiary to the Economic and Social Council are: the Statistical Commission; the Commission on Population and Development; the Commission for Social Development; the Commission on the Status of Women; the Commission on Narcotic Drugs; the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; the Commission on Science and Technology for Development; the Commission on Sustainable Development; and the United Nations Forum on Forests.

⁷ The Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation, established in 2001, is an expert body subsidiary to the Commission and, unlike the seven other committees, is not a legislative committee: ESCWA resolution 225 (XXI) of 11 May 2001 on the establishment of an ESCWA consultative committee on scientific and technological development and technological innovation.

sessions should be biennial,⁸ favouring a reduction in the frequency of sessions, so that the human and financial resources released could be used for other activities in support of development efforts by member countries. For similar reasons, the Commission decided in 1999 to harmonize the frequency of the sessions of its then subsidiary bodies by holding them biennially. These decisions were also based on the rationale that the Commission and its subsidiary bodies could hold special sessions as needed, in accordance with the provisions set out in the ESCWA rules of procedure.⁹ In 2001, the Commission took the decision to increase the frequency of the sessions of the Committee on Transport from biennial to annual, so that that the Committee could carry out annual monitoring of the follow-up action required under the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq.¹⁰ When establishing the Committee on Women in April 2003, the Commission determined that the Committee should hold its sessions biennially with effect from 2004 and that an inaugural session should be held before the end of 2003.¹¹ Although the change in the frequency of sessions from biennial to annual was recommended at its inaugural session,¹² at its second session in 2004, the Committee on Women decided to hold its third session in 2006, in accordance with the original decision of the Commission.¹³

7. Since 1994, there has only been one special session of the Commission to consider the reform of ESCWA and any resulting programme restructuring; this was held in 2002. No special sessions have been called by any of the committees.

II. CHALLENGES FOR ESCWA IN RESPONDING TO THE EMERGING NEEDS OF MEMBER COUNTRIES IN THE LIGHT OF THE ONGOING UNITED NATIONS REFORMS IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT

8. At the seventh session of the Statistics Committee (Beirut, 7-9 November 2006), the issue of the frequency of its sessions was revisited. Recognizant of the potential additional programmatic and budgetary implications, the Committee recommended that ESCWA establish a regional working group comprising statistical office directors from member countries, which would meet in years when the Statistical Committee does not convene, in order to discuss recent statistical developments and to consult the secretariat on its programme of work and related activities.¹⁴ Similarly, the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region, at its fifth session (Beirut, 24-26 April 2007), recommended that the secretariat should take the measures necessary to amend the current name of the Committee to the 'Technical Committee on Liberalizing Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization, and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region'. The Technical Committee also recommended that it should convene once every two years and hold two separate expert group meetings during the period between each Committee session, one of which should be dedicated to trade issues and the other to regional integration and financing for development. This should be done, however, without incurring additional costs.¹⁵

⁸ ESCWA resolution 196 (XVII) of 31 May 1994 concerning Frequency of sessions of the Commission and the Technical Committee.

⁹ Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2003).

¹⁰ ESCWA resolution 229 (XXI) of 11 May 2001 concerning Frequency of the sessions of the ESCWA Committee on Transport.

¹¹ ESCWA resolution 240 (XXII) of 17 April 2003 concerning The establishment within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia of a Committee on Women.

¹² Report of the Committee on Women on its first session, para. 4(f) (E/ESCWA/WOM/2003/IG.1/9).

¹³ Report of the Arab Regional Conference Ten Years After Beijing: Call for Peace, para. 19 (E/ESCWA/WOM/2004/IG.1/6).

¹⁴ Report of the Statistical Committee on its seventh session, para. 4(i) (E/ESCWA/SCU/2006/IG.1/12).

¹⁵ Report of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region, para. 6(a) (E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/IG.2/7).

9. The Committee on Energy, at its sixth session (Doha, 4-5 February 2007), recommended that the frequency of its sessions be changed from biennial to annual,¹⁶ to bring it into alignment with the annual sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), to which ESCWA and the other regional commissions are required to report on the status of regional progress on energy issues with regard to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The recommendation was reached after considerable deliberation on alternative arrangements. Likewise, the Committee on Social Development, at its sixth session (Amman, 5-7 March 2007), recommended that the frequency of its sessions be annualised.¹⁷ This recommendation was based on the premise that annual sessions would not only increase the rate of joint monitoring of the progress achieved in the work of the Committee by member countries and the secretariat, but would also enable the Committee to provide a timely response to emerging social issues and strengthen the network of social policy makers in the region, resulting in improved communication and coordination.

10. Through a series of bilateral consultations between the Executive Secretary and member countries since his appointment in August 2007,¹⁸ the secretariat has also received feedback on the need to increase interaction among member countries, as well as between member countries and the secretariat, in order to enhance the relevance of the work of the Commission, including a timely response to the expressed needs of member countries.

11. At the 2005 World Summit, global leaders resolved to strengthen and update the programme of work of the United Nations in order to address the requirements of member countries. To that end, the Secretary-General was requested to facilitate a review of the existing mandates of the Organization. Together with other United Nations bodies, ESCWA has been participating in the ongoing global mandate review exercise since November 2005.

12. In parallel to this exercise, the Organization is striving to rationalize current intergovernmental machineries and to strengthen the global-regional linkage of the work of the United Nations in supporting national development efforts. In this regard, the General Assembly decided that the regional commissions should make optimal use of their existing intergovernmental bodies to facilitate regional consultation among their respective member countries as a process preparatory to global consultation. The recommendations of the Committee on Energy, the Committee on Social Development, the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region, and the decision by the Statistical Committee to establish a regional working group were all influenced by this consideration.

III. THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL MACHINERIES OF OTHER REGIONAL COMMISSIONS AND THE FREQUENCY OF THEIR SESSIONS

13. From their varied historical backgrounds, the five regional commissions have each developed different intergovernmental machineries and session frequency, as set out in annex I. Each regional commission has also established advisory/consultative/executive bodies to ensure frequent interaction with their constituencies, monitor work in progress and address emerging issues.

14. While the current intergovernmental structure of ESCWA has been built gradually since 1992, those of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) resulted from major reforms in 2005 and 2006 respectively. The intergovernmental structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) was based on the outcome of major reform in 2002 and subsequent adjustments made in 2007. These reforms were based on a series of evaluations and a number of intergovernmental and informal consultations with their constituencies aimed at aligning intergovernmental

¹⁶ Report of the Committee on Energy on its sixth session, para. 4(f) (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2007/IG.1/7).

¹⁷ Report of the Committee on Social Development on its sixth session, para. 3(b) (E/ESCWA/SDD/2007/IG.1/8).

¹⁸ Including Bahrain, Lebanon, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

machineries with changing programme priorities and focus areas. In contrast, the intergovernmental structure of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has been in existence for a considerable time.

15. The intergovernmental structures of ECA, ECE and ESCWA are sector-based, while those of ECLAC and ESCAP are, to a greater extent, theme-based. The intergovernmental bodies of ECA, ESCAP, ECE and ECLAC are supported by active advisory/consultative/executive bodies, which meet frequently and address substantive programme issues. As a consequence of their wide geographical coverage, both ECA and ECLAC have intergovernmental mechanisms to deliberate on subregion-specific development issues.

16. While ECA, ESCAP and ECE allow flexibility in the duration of most intergovernmental sessions, ECLAC and ESCWA intergovernmental sessions are of fixed duration. Furthermore, ESCWA and ECLAC have fewer intergovernmental meeting days per biennium: 28 and 21-30 meeting days respectively. These numbers represent formal intergovernmental sessions and exclude the sessions and meeting days of the advisory/consultative/executive bodies, which support the work of the intergovernmental bodies.

IV. KEY FINDINGS AND THE WAY FORWARD

Key findings

17. As a result of this review, the following key findings have been identified:

(a) While no evaluation of its overall intergovernmental structure has been carried out by ESCWA, the decision of the Commission to regulate the frequency of intergovernmental sessions derived from consultations with member countries, which felt that the limited resources allocated to ESCWA should be used to provide a variety of services in support of member countries, including technical cooperation activities.

(b) To enhance system-wide coherence within the United Nations, the core role and function of ESCWA and the other regional commissions has been evolving to refocus on the provision of intergovernmental forums for the preparation and servicing of and follow-up to the annual sessions of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, as well as other key global conferences. For example, the current Commission session provides an opportunity for member countries to carry out regional consultations to assess both the progress achieved and the gaps identified in pursuing the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development, the outcome of which will be presented at the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to be held in Doha from 29 November – 2 December 2008.

(c) While it is still too early to assess the effectiveness of the Technical Committee, it is worth noting that the secretariat received written comments from six member countries on the draft strategic framework for 2010-2011 as a direct result of the collective review at the first meeting of the Committee.

18. Although the scope of this document is limited to the frequency of intergovernmental sessions, there are other means of enhancing interaction among member countries, as well as between member countries and the secretariat. Further improving the format and sharpening the focus of intergovernmental sessions may lead to improved interaction, as was indicated by the results of the evaluation of 18 intergovernmental sessions held between March 2004 and December 2007¹⁹ and from consultations with other regional commissions.

19. Since the work of the Commission requires collegial effort by member countries and the secretariat, commitment from member countries is essential for providing substantive input during the preparatory process, identifying appropriate representatives, taking active participation in deliberations and following up

¹⁹ Evaluation of intergovernmental sessions (E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I)/Add.1).

on the recommendations and decisions arising from the sessions. The secretariat is required to provide timely coordination and service to member countries, including proposing topical agenda items based on its normative, analytical and operational work, the provision of issue-oriented background documents to facilitate meaningful deliberation, the timely dissemination of session reports and regular follow-up on the progress made in the implementation of recommendations and decisions.

Way forward

20. Based on the key findings identified in paragraph 17, the following options are proposed by the secretariat for the consideration and decision of the Commission:

Option one

21. Under this option, the frequency of Commission sessions would be increased from biennial to annual, with effect from the biennium 2008-2009. The frequency of meetings of the Technical Committee would be reduced from semi-annual to annual, thereby allowing six-monthly interactions between member countries and the secretariat at the programme level. The Committees currently meet biennially and this frequency would remain unchanged. Their work would be supported by establishing regional working/expert groups, which would meet in the years in which the Committees do not meet, following the example of the Statistical Committee and the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region. This proposal is set out in greater detail in annex II, part A.

Benefits envisaged: The Commission would be able to renew its mandates on an annual basis. The work of regional working/expert groups would assist the Commission at its annual sessions in tackling emerging sectoral development issues and provide appropriate mandates for concrete action.

Programmatic and financial implications: In order to convene Commission sessions annually, ESCWA would require additional human and financial resources from the regular budget for the preparation of documents and other information material, as well as in-session and post-session services. The programme of work for 2008-2009 would need to be revised to include the substantive servicing of the additional Commission session and the production of documents for it. The cost of establishing regional working/expert groups could be met within the regular budget resources allocated to ESCWA for the biennium 2008-2009. The financing of the organization of the newly-established regional working/expert groups would have to replace the funding of the ad hoc expert group meetings that are currently included in the programme of work for 2008-2009.

Option two

22. Under this option, while maintaining the current frequency of the Commission and the other Committees, the frequency of the Committee on Energy and the Committee on Social Development would be increased from biennial to annual, with effect from the biennium 2008-2009. The Technical Committee would continue to convene its meetings six-monthly. In close consultation with member countries, the secretariat would monitor the outcome of (a) the work of the group of three Committees that meet annually (the Committee on Energy, the Committee on Social Development and the Committee on Transport); (b) the work of the Statistical Committee and the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region, which would be supported by regional working/expert groups; and (c) the work of the Commission and the Committees that continue to meet on a biennial basis, and the role of the Technical Committee in supporting their work. A comparative assessment of the outcome of these groupings would be submitted to the twenty-seventh session of the Commission, which will be held in the spring of 2012. This proposal is set out in greater detail in annex II, part B.

Benefits envisaged: This approach would provide an experimental period for the member countries and the secretariat, and would allow the Commission to make an informed decision, based on the results of the comparative assessment. It would also allow the Commission to respond to the expressed needs of the Committee on Energy and the Committee on Social Development.

Programmatic and financial implications: Additional human and financial resources would be required in order to meet the anticipated additional workload in conference services, especially in programme support areas. The programme of work pertaining to subprogrammes 1 and 2 would need to be revised to include the servicing of the additional sessions and the preparation of documents and information material.

Option three

23. Since the frequency of intergovernmental sessions cannot be considered separately from programme priority, ESCWA intergovernmental machineries and other related factors, the secretariat would carry out an in-depth evaluation of the intergovernmental structure of ESCWA in the light of both the programme priority, as identified by member countries, and the ongoing United Nations reforms. At the same time, the contribution of the Technical Committee, which became operational in January 2008, would be closely monitored and assessed. Both the evaluation and the assessment would be carried out in close consultation with member countries, using the existing forum of the Technical Committee, which is responsible for reviewing the work of ESCWA at programme level. The outcome of the evaluation and the assessment would be reported to the Commission at its twenty-sixth session, scheduled for 2010. Until then, the current frequency of the sessions of the Commission and the existing Committees would be maintained.

Benefits envisaged: There would be minimal change to the approved programme of work of ESCWA for the biennium 2008-2009. At the same time, this option would allow time for the newly-operational Technical Committee to further articulate its role and functions in supporting the work of ESCWA.

Programme and budgetary implications: Since the secretariat is required to report on the outcome of the evaluation and the assessment to the twenty-sixth session of the Commission, any action necessary would be taken during the biennium 2008-2009, within the staff and non-staff resources available in the regular budget.

V. ACTION REQUIRED BY THE COMMISSION

24. The Commission is invited to review this document, exchange views on the key findings and the way forward presented herein, and make concrete recommendations in order to enable the secretariat to take such follow-up action as may be necessary.

Annex I

INTERGOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURES OF THE FIVE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

Intergovernmental body	Frequency and duration	Programme areas (subprogrammes)
1. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)^{a/}		
Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development	Annual (7 meeting days per session)	ECA programme as a whole, with special focus on economic and social development in Africa under the substantive coordination of the Office of Strategic Planning and Programme Management (OPM)
Subregional ministerial meetings (SMMs) and intergovernmental committees of experts (ICEs)	SMMs: held back to back with ministerial meetings of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) (1 meeting day; periodicity varies, depending on the frequency of RECs meetings); ICEs: annual (3-5 meeting days for each of the five subregional offices)	7. Subregional activities for development
Committee on Women and Development	Biennial (3-5 meeting days)	6. Gender and women in development
Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology	Biennial (3-5 meeting days)	4. Information and science and technology for development
Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development	Biennial (3-5 meeting days)	2. Food security and sustainable development
Committee on Human and Social Development and Civil Society	Biennial (3-5 meeting days)	10. Social development
Committee on Trade and Regional Cooperation and Integration	Biennial (3-5 meeting days)	1. Trade, finance and economic development; 5. Economic cooperation and regional integration
Committee on Governance and Popular Participation	Biennial (3-5 meeting days)	3. Governance and public administration
Committee on Statistics	Biennial (3-5 meeting days)	9. Statistics
<i>Number of sessions and meeting days per biennium: 20 sessions and 39 meeting days.^{b/}</i>		
2. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)		
Commission ^{c/}	Annual (7 meeting days per session)	ESCAP programme
Committee on Poverty Reduction	Annual (3-5 meeting days per session)	1. Poverty and development; 2. Statistics; 3. Development of Pacific Island countries and territories
Committee on Managing Globalization, Parts I and II	Annual (3-5 meeting days per session)	4. Trade and investment (Part I); 5. Transport and tourism (Part I); 6. Environment and sustainable development (Part II); 7. Information, communication and space technology (Part II)

Intergovernmental body	Frequency and duration	Programme areas (subprogrammes)
Committee on Emerging Social Issues	Annual (3-5 meeting days per session)	8. Social development, including persistent and emerging issues
Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries	Biennial (2 meeting days)	ESCAP programme
Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries	Biennial (2 meeting days)	3. Development of Pacific Island countries and territories
<i>Number of sessions and meeting days per biennium: 10 sessions and 36 to 48 meeting days</i>		
3. Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)		
Commission ^{d/}	Biennial (2.5 meeting days)	ECE programme
Committee on Environmental Policy	Annual (2-3 meeting days per session)	1. Environment
Inland Transport Committee	Annual (2-3 meeting days per session)	2. Transport
Conference of European Statisticians	Annual (2-3 meeting days per session)	3. Statistics
Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration	Annual (2-3 meeting days per session)	4. Economic Cooperation and Integration
Committee on Sustainable Energy	Annual (2-3 meeting days per session)	5. Sustainable Energy
Committee on Trade	Annual (2-3 meeting days per session)	6. Trade
Timber Committee	Annual (2-3 meeting days per session)	7. Timber and Forestry
Committee on Housing and Land Management	Annual (2-3 meeting days per session)	8. Housing and Land Management and Population
<i>Number of sessions and meeting days per biennium: 17 sessions and 34.5-50.5 meeting days</i>		
4. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)		
Commission, with ad hoc committees on South-South cooperation and on population and development	Biennial (3 meeting days at technical level plus 2 meeting days at ministerial level, totalling 5 meeting days per session)	ECLAC programme
Committee of the Whole	Regular meetings at United Nations Headquarters with permanent representatives of ECLAC Member States in the years in which no Commission session is held (2 meeting days per session)	Issues of concern to the Commission
Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean and its Presiding Officers	Conference: every three years (3 meeting days per session); Presiding Officers: three times per biennium (2 meeting days per session)	ECLAC programme, with special focus on subprogramme 5 (Mainstreaming the gender perspective into the regional development process)
Committee of High-level Government Experts	Annual, as and when required (1-3 meeting days per session)	Implementation and appraisal of development strategies
Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee	Annual (Monitoring Committee Meeting of the CDCC: 2 meeting days per session in alternate years; CDCC meeting: 3 meeting days per session in alternate years)	Coordination of economic and social development cooperation and specific issues of concern to Caribbean members of ECLAC

Intergovernmental body	Frequency and duration	Programme areas (subprogrammes)
Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) and its Presiding Officers	Council: every four years (3 meeting days per session); Presiding Officers: at least once a year (2 meeting days per session)	ILPES programme
Executive Committee of the ECLAC Statistical Conference of the Americas	Annual (2 meeting days per session)	10. Statistics and economic projections
ECLAC Statistical Conference of the Americas	Biennial (3 meeting days)	10. Statistics and economic projections
<i>Number of sessions and meeting days per biennium: 9 to 11 sessions and 21 to 30 meeting days.^{e/}</i>		
5. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia^{f/}		
Commission ^{g/}	Biennial (4 meeting days)	ESCWA programme
Committee on Energy	Biennial (3 meeting days)	1. Integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development
Committee on Water Resources	Biennial (3 meeting days)	1. Integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development
Committee on Social Development	Biennial (3 meeting days)	2. Integrated social policies
Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region	Biennial (3 meeting days)	3. Economic development and integration
Committee on Transport	Annual (3 meeting days)	3. Economic development and integration
Statistical Committee	Biennial (3 meeting days)	5. Statistics for evidence-based policymaking
Committee on Women	Biennial (3 meeting days)	6. Advancement of women
<i>Number of sessions and meeting days per biennium: 9 sessions and 28 meeting days</i>		

^{a/} The African Institute for Economic Development and Planning is an autonomous institution with its own Governing Council and is not part of the structure of ECA intergovernmental bodies.

^{b/} Figures for the biennium 2008-2009.

^{c/} The work of the Commission is supported by the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR), which meets for half a day, 22 times per biennium.

^{d/} The work of the Commission is supported by the Executive Committee, which meets for half a day, 16-20 times per biennium.

^{e/} The total number of sessions and meeting days varies from biennium to biennium.

^{f/} The Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development, which meets biennially and guides the work pertaining to subprogramme 5 (Information and communication technology for regional integration), is non-intergovernmental.

^{g/} The work of the Commission is supported by the Technical Committee, which was established by the Commission and meets biannually, and the Advisory Committee of Ambassadors, which meets for half a day, 8 times per biennium.

Annex II

OPTIONS FOR THE FREQUENCY OF ESCWA INTERGOVERNMENTAL SESSIONS

A. OPTION 1

Intergovernmental body	Frequency and duration	Remarks
Commission	Annual (4 meeting days per session)	Under this option, the Technical Committee would meet annually, rather than biannually.
Committee on Energy	Biennial (3 meeting days)	A regional working group may be established to assist the work of the Committee. However, this would not meet the recommendation of the Committee on Energy at its sixth session that the frequency of its meetings be increased from biennial to annual.
Committee on Water Resources	Biennial (3 meeting days)	A regional working group may be established to assist the work of the Committee.
Committee on Social Development	Biennial (3 meeting days)	A regional working group may be established to assist the work of the Committee. However, this would not meet the recommendation of the Committee on Social Development at its sixth session that the frequency of its meetings be increased from biennial to annual.
Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region	Biennial (3 meeting days)	Two expert group meetings will take place between Technical Committee sessions and will support the work of the Technical Committee. One expert group will be dedicated to trade issues and the other to regional integration and financing for development.
Committee on Transport	Annual (3 meeting days per session)	
Statistical Committee	Biennial (3 meeting days)	The regional working group, composed of statistical office directors from member countries, has been established following the recommendation of the Statistical Committee at its seventh session.
Committee on Women	Biennial (3 meeting days)	A regional working group, comprising national women's machineries or equivalent ministries, may be established to assist the work of the Committee.
<i>Number of sessions and meeting days per biennium: 10 sessions and 32 meeting days</i>		

B. OPTION 2

Intergovernmental bodies	Frequency (duration)	Remark
Commission	Biennial (4 meeting days)	Under this option, the role and functions of the Bureau of the Commission would be strengthened. The Technical Committee would take timely and appropriate action at the request of the Bureau. While the frequency of the Technical Committee would remain biannual, the timing of meetings would be more flexible.
Committee on Energy	Annual (3 meeting days per session)	This would meet the recommendation of the Committee on Energy at its sixth session to increase the frequency of its meetings.
Committee on Water Resources	Biennial (3 meeting days)	A regional working group may be established to assist the work of the Committee.
Committee on Social Development	Annual (3 meeting days per session)	This would meet the recommendation of the Committee on Social Development at its sixth session to increase the frequency of its meetings.
Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region	Biennial (3 meeting days)	Two expert group meetings would take place during the period between Technical Committee sessions and would support the work of the Technical Committee. One expert group would be dedicated to trade issues and the other to regional integration and financing for development.
Committee on Transport	Annual (3 meeting days per session)	
Statistical Committee	Biennial (3 meeting days)	The regional working group, composed of statistical office directors from member countries, has been established following the recommendation of the Statistical Committee at its seventh session.
Committee on Women	Biennial (3 meeting days)	
<i>Number of sessions and meeting days per biennium: 11 sessions and 34 meeting days</i>		
