

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

Committee on Trade Policies in the States Members of the Economic
and Social Commission for Western Asia
Fourth session
Beirut, 8-9 July 2025

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Annotations

1. Opening of the session

The Committee on Trade Policies in the States Members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was established pursuant to ESCWA resolution 332 (XXX) of 28 June 2018 on developing the work of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development, which split the Technical Committee into the Committee on Financing for Development in the States Members of ESCWA and the Committee on Trade Policies in the States Members of ESCWA. Since then, the Committee on Trade Policies in the States Members of ESCWA has held three sessions. The fourth session will be held in Beirut on 8 and 9 July 2025, and will open at 10 a.m. at the United Nations House.

2. Election of officers

Rule 18 of the rules of procedure of ESCWA states: “Member States shall chair the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations. Unless the Commission decides otherwise, those bodies shall elect all their other officers”.*

3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Rule 8 of the rules of procedure of ESCWA, which apply to subsidiary bodies, states: “At the beginning of each session, once the Chair has assumed his/her duties in accordance with rule 12, the Committee shall adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda”. Pursuant to that rule, the Committee shall adopt the agenda and the organization of work as submitted in documents E/ESCWA/C.6/2025/L.1 and E/ESCWA/C.6/2025/L.2, respectively, or in amended forms.

Follow-up issues

4. Implementation of trade policy activities under the ESCWA programme plan and of recommendations made by the Committee at its third session to the ESCWA secretariat (E/ESCWA/C.6/2025/3)

The Committee will review activities undertaken in the field of trade policies under the ESCWA programme plan for the period 2023-2024, and pursuant to recommendations it made to the ESCWA secretariat at the close of its third session. These activities include developing tools to support evidence-based policymaking, issuing papers and holding meetings.

* ESCWA member States in the Arabic alphabetical order are as follows: Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, the Syrian Arab Republic, Djibouti, the Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Oman, the State of Palestine, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Mauritania and Yemen.

The Committee is invited to take note of those activities and make comments thereon.

5. Technical cooperation activities (E/ESCWA/C.6/2025/4)

The Committee will consider technical cooperation activities carried out by the ESCWA secretariat in response to requests from member States for support in the field of trade policies. Those activities include advisory services, training workshops and field projects. This is a standing agenda item for all ESCWA committees, aimed at ensuring follow-up on technical cooperation requests made by member States and informing them of developments in technical cooperation work methods.

The Committee is invited to take note of those activities and discuss technical cooperation priorities and needs.

6. Implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee at its third session to ESCWA member States (briefings by State representatives)

Representatives of ESCWA member States will brief the Committee on national actions taken pursuant to recommendations made to them by the Committee at its third session. Those recommendations are set out in the report of the third session of the Committee ([E/ESCWA/C.6/2023/11/Report](#), paragraph 2, page 3).

Representatives of member States are invited to make short interventions on the implementation of those recommendations at the national level.

Emerging issues

7. Arab trade: trends, highlights and impact of global developments (E/ESCWA/C.6/2025/5)

The Committee will review trends of merchandise trade in the Arab region in the light of global developments, based on two ESCWA publications, “[Arab trade in 2023: Trends and highlights](#)” and “[United States tariff shockwaves: impact on the Arab region](#)”.

The Committee is invited to discuss regional trade trends and explore means to enhance intraregional trade.

8. European Union Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: exposure and risks for Arab countries (E/ESCWA/C.6/2025/6)

The Committee will examine the challenges and opportunities of fully implementing the European Union Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) for ESCWA member States, though an analysis by the ESCWA secretariat of exposure risks at sectoral and product levels.

The Committee is invited to take note of the analysis and comment on ways forward in that regard.

9. Results of the Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation (E/ESCWA/C.6/2025/7)

The committee will examine the results of the digital and sustainable trade facilitation survey of 2023, which was conducted through a collaboration between the five regional commissions of the United Nations. The survey is conducted every two years and assesses progress made by countries in the implementation of the various types of trade facilitation measures aimed at fostering cross border trade.

The committee is invited to comment on the results collected by the survey.

10. Role of competition policy in trade (E/ESCWA/C.6/2025/8)

The Committee will examine the interplay between trade dynamics and competition policy across the Arab region, focusing on the crucial role of strong competition frameworks in guaranteeing fair market access and trade efficiency. The Committee will also discuss the need to harmonize competition policies within bilateral and regional trade agreements to prevent regulatory fragmentation and guarantee a level playing field for business.

The Committee is invited to comment on the role of competition policy in boosting trade, and to provide ideas on mechanisms for aligning competition frameworks with broader trade liberalization initiatives across the Arab region.

Trade tools and analyses

11. New features of the Global Economywide Trade Simulator Interface (E/ESCWA/C.6/2025/9)

The Committee will examine the Global Economywide Trade Simulator Interface (GETSI) designed by the ESCWA secretariat to assist decision makers across Arab countries in shaping trade policies that are fully aligned with their economic strategies and long-term visions. Building on the foundation of the ESCWA Arab Trade Simulator Interface (ATSI), this new user-friendly interface is customized to address the unique economic needs and priorities of each of the country involved in this effort in terms of data, sectoral and geographical details, and policy instruments.

The Committee is invited to provide comments on means to further develop GETSI.

12. Arab free trade agreements (E/ESCWA/C.6/2025/10)

The Committee will review efforts undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat to improve the visibility and understanding of trade agreements involving Arab countries, including a collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to fill information gaps in its Trade Intelligence and Negotiation Adviser portal (TINA). The purpose of this collaboration is to provide Arab countries with a clearer view of the trade frameworks that they can utilize within a global perspective, and to support them in fully leveraging regional and global trade opportunities, fostering deeper economic integration, and promoting sustainable growth.

The Committee is invited to take note of the work of the ESCWA secretariat in relation to Arab trade agreements and to comment on the way forward.

Programmatic issues

13. Round-table discussion: Arab region priorities in a changing trade landscape (E/ESCWA/C.6/2025/11)

The Committee will hold a round-table discussion on regional priorities in the light of the changing trade landscape and the overlap of free trade agreements. The discussion is aimed at defining the key priorities for the work of the ESCWA secretariat in the period 2025-2027.

Member State representatives are invited to participate actively in the discussion and to comment on these priorities.

14. Date and venue of the fifth session of the Committee

The Committee will agree on the date and venue of its fifth session.

15. Other matters

This item shall cover any other matters that the Committee may wish to raise and discuss.

16. Adoption of recommendations made by the Committee at its fourth session

The Committee will consider the draft recommendations for discussion and adoption.
