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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Committee on Women
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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017
in the advancement of women**

Summary

This document presents the proposed activities to be implemented by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the biennium 2016-2017 in the field of advancement of women. The proposed activities have been formulated with reference to subprogramme 6, Advancement of women, of the ESCWA strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017. The responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies with the ESCWA Centre for Women.

The Committee on Women is invited to review and present comments on the proposed outputs, the extent to which they meet the priorities of ESCWA member States and their relevance to the expected accomplishments in the field of advancement of women under subprogramme 6. The Committee is also invited to discuss ways to concretely measure the indicators of achievement in order to accurately monitor progress achieved in member States as a result of implementing the proposed outputs.

SUBPROGRAMME 6: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

The proposed programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017

Objective: To reduce gender imbalances and contribute to strengthening the respect of the rights of women in member States in line with international conventions and outcomes of conferences, and encourage the exchange of lessons learned in this field to build a society that guarantees justice without discrimination.

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
<p>(a) Member States design and implement inclusive gender-sensitive policies and strategies and plans towards the elimination of gender discrimination and violations of the economic, political and social rights of women</p> <p>Strategic pillar: inclusive development Priority area: social justice</p>	<p>(a) (i) Number of inclusive gender-sensitive policies and strategies designed by member States with the assistance of ESCWA</p> <p>(ii) Number of inclusive gender-sensitive action plans implemented by member States with the assistance of ESCWA</p>
<p>(b) Member States collaborate on the development and implementation of regional frameworks that are in line with international conventions and outcomes of conferences on the rights of women and gender equality</p> <p>Strategic pillar: regional integration Priority area: policy coherence</p>	<p>(b) (i) Number of subregional or regional frameworks that are in line with international conventions, conferences and agreements</p> <p>(ii) Number of regional networks established with the assistance of ESCWA for collaboration and cooperation on women's issues</p>
<p>(c) Member States establish institutional mechanisms that ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making processes</p> <p>Strategic pillar: good governance and resilience Priority area: participation and citizenship</p>	<p>(c) (i) Number of established mechanisms, including yearly campaigns, to increase the access of women to decision-making posts</p> <p>(ii) Percentage of women in decision-making posts</p> <p>(iii) Number of committees that include civil society organizations and national machineries for the advancement of women, established with the assistance of ESCWA, to collaborate on drafting national reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)</p>

Strategy

19.58 The ESCWA Centre for Women is responsible for the implementation of subprogramme 6. ESCWA will continue to work closely with national machineries for the advancement of women, national stakeholders, relevant United Nations entities, regional organizations and all divisions within ESCWA to address ongoing challenges that undermine women's social rights, their effective economic participation and their meaningful role in decision-making at all levels. Recent political developments in various Arab countries have also indicated the fragile situation of women, prompting the necessity to protect acquired rights while enhancing women's involvement in post-conflict and transitional processes.

19.59 Drawing on established partnerships, previous achievements and the recommendations of the ESCWA Committee on Women, particularly the Kuwait Declaration on the Eradication of Violence against Women 2013, which was adopted by the Committee on Women at its sixth session, and the Strategic Framework for the Implementation of the Cairo Declaration on Arab Women: Women Development Agenda in the Arab Region beyond 2015 (2015-2030), ESCWA will adopt an implementation strategy rooted in a three-pronged approach:

(a) Enhancing synergy and collaboration among member States to respond to the requirements of relevant international instruments and global agreements through regional and sub-regional frameworks, such as joint strategies, platforms, appeals, action plans and declarations. These frameworks will address gender-related regional priorities, including early and forced marriage, female labour migration, women and knowledge society, violence and harmful practices against women, the needs of female refugees, and women in conflict settings. Efforts will be made to promote the sharing of information about these regional frameworks with countries in the region;

(b) Providing support to member States in the design, development and implementation of national strategies, policies and legislations to eliminate gender discrimination in all socioeconomic and political domains. This includes the enhancement of national capacities to address gender-related gaps in the private sphere (child marriage and domestic violence); in the economic sector (access to financial resources, employment opportunities, job discrimination and access to high-level managerial posts); and in the social domain (gender-based violence and stereotypical representation of women and gender roles in the media);

(c) Enhancing women's access to all levels of decision-making processes and their representation in governance structures, especially during times of conflict and occupation. This includes ensuring women's meaningful participation in executive, legislative, parliamentary and judicial bodies.

19.60 ESCWA will utilize available tools of evidence-based research, knowledge-sharing, capacity building, advocacy and networking, and monitoring and evaluation. It will complete high quality deliverables, including in-depth studies, needs and impact assessments, policy briefs, situation analysis reports, training modules and technical materials, in the context of its normative work, technical support and advisory services. ESCWA will continue to foster collaboration between relevant governmental bodies and national and regional stakeholders through the organization of expert group meetings, workshops and thematic conferences, and the commemoration of events relevant to women's rights and gender equality. It will also maintain cooperation with other United Nations entities, regional organizations, national and regional academic institutions and civil society organizations.

External factors

Subprogramme 6 will achieve its objective and expected accomplishments provided that: (a) there is a political will for enhancing the role of national machineries for the advancement of women and strengthening dialogue with civil society; (b) member States take measures to align existing laws, regulations and practices with their commitments to the outcomes of international conventions and conferences on gender equality and the advancement of women; (c) the political situation in the region does not further deteriorate; and (d) current national, regional and international changes in the region do not reverse acquired gains in gender equality leading to a widened inequality gaps.

Outputs

During the biennium 2016-2017, the following outputs will be delivered under subprogramme 6:

(a) *Servicing intergovernmental and expert bodies (regular budget)*

(i) *Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (twenty-ninth session)*

Parliamentary documentation: Report of the Committee on Women on its seventh session.

(ii) *Committee on Women*

- a. Substantive servicing of the eighth session of the Committee on Women;
- b. Parliamentary documentation:
 - i. Report on gender and sustainable development goals;
 - ii. Report on gender mainstreaming in public institutions.

(iii) *Ad hoc expert groups*

Substantive servicing to ad hoc expert groups on the following subjects:

- a. The ESCWA publication *Strategic Frameworks on Effective Institutional Gender Mainstreaming in the Arab Region*;
- b. Findings of the report *Status of Arab Women*;
- c. The ESCWA publication *Gender Equality, Demographic Changes and Female Migration in the Arab Region*;
- d. The ESCWA publication *Arab Women and the New Social Contract: Towards Meaningful Engagement and Participation in Decision-Making*.

(b) *Other substantive activities (regular budget)*

(i) *Recurrent publications*

- a. *Status of Arab Women: National Laws and International Conventions*;
- b. *Arab Women and the New Social Contract: Towards Meaningful Engagement and Participation in Decision-Making*.

(ii) *Non-recurrent publications*

- a. *Strategic Frameworks on Effective Institutional Gender Mainstreaming in the Arab Region*;
- b. *Gender equality, demographic changes and female migration in the Arab Region*.

(iii) *Other publications*

- a. Poster for the eighth session of the Committee on Women;
- b. Information kit for the eighth session of the Committee on women.

(iv) *Technical material*

- a. Gender policy brief: Arab women, leadership and political participation (2016);
- b. Gender policy brief: A gender perspective on the agricultural sector and food security in the Arab region (2017);
- c. Gender policy brief: Arab women and economic participation - strategies for improvement (2016);
- d. Gender policy brief: Female labour migration in the Arab region - status and rights (2017);

- e. Gender policy brief: Economic contribution of Arab female migrant workers (2016);
- f. Social and Economic Situation of Palestinian Women under Israeli Occupation in 2015-2016;
- g. E-regional network on sharing good practices and cross-border regional collaboration on effective gender mainstreaming in national institutions (2016-2017).

(v) *Special events*

- a. International Women's Day (2016 and 2017);
- b. International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (2016 and 2017);
- c. Launching two thematic publications (2016 and 2017);
- d. Gender discussion series (2016 and 2017).

Annex

LEGISLATIVE MANDATES

Subprogramme 6. Advancement of women

General Assembly resolutions

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| 66/128 | Violence against women migrant workers |
| 66/129 | Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas |
| 66/130 | Women and political participation |
| 66/131 | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| 66/285 | Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies |
| 67/144 | Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women |
| 67/148 | Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly |

Economic and Social Council resolutions

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| 2011/5 | The role of the United Nations system in implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women |
| 2013/17 | Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women |

ESCWA resolution

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| 286 (XXV) | Gender statistics for equality and empowerment of women |
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