

**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

First session

Amman, 8-9 December 2019



Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Provisional agenda and annotations

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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 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 two committees. The United Nations Economic and Social Council approved the splitting in its resolution 2019/30 of 23 July 2019. The newly created Committee on Trade Policies in the States Members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia is thus holding its first session in Amman, on 8 and 9 December 2019.

2. Election of officers

Rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia 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 the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 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.6/2019/L.1 and E/ESCWA/C.6/2019/L.2, respectively, or in amended forms.

Follow-up issues

4. Activities related to trade policies under the ESCWA programme of work for the period 2018-2019 (E/ESCWA/C.6/2019/3)

The Committee will review the activities undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat in the field of trade policies under the ESCWA programme of work since the eleventh session of the Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development, i.e. during the period from November 2017 to November 2019.

* ESCWA member States in the Arabic alphabetical order are as follows: Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, 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 and recommendations thereon.

5. Technical cooperation activities (E/ESCWA/C.6/2019/4)

The Committee will take note of the technical cooperation activities carried out by the ESCWA secretariat in response to requests from member States. Those activities include advisory services, training workshops and field projects.

The Committee is invited to take note of those activities and express its views thereon.

6. Implementation of the recommendations made by the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development at its eleventh session (focus on trade) (E/ESCWA/C.6/2019/5)

The Committee will review activities undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat pursuant to the recommendations made by the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development at its eleventh session, which focused on trade.

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

Arab trade monitoring and evaluation tools

7. Assessing Arab economic integration: trade in services as a driver of growth and development (E/ESCWA/EC.6/2019/6-E/ESCWA/C.6/2019/6)

The Committee will consider economic integration in the area of trade in services. Focus on services is motivated by the fact that services trade liberalization is a major avenue for extending the scope of regional economic integration, and driving growth and development. The services sector accounts for large and growing shares of output, employment and foreign direct investment. Services do not only satisfy domestic consumption and investment demands but are also exported and used as intermediate inputs. The services sector in the Arab region could benefit from further liberalization, integration and reform in the context of regional and international trade agreements.

The Committee is invited to discuss the role of trade in services as a driver of growth and development and propose a way forward for ESCWA work in that area.

8. Monitoring and evaluating Arab economic integration (E/ESCWA/EC.6/2019/7/Rev.1-E/ESCWA/C.6/2019/7)

The Committee will consider a system of composite indices and scoreboards proposed by the ESCWA secretariat to monitor and assess economic integration in the Arab region. The tool is meant to understand whether Arab regional trade agreements help their members to perform better as a group than each on their own, and encourage pulling together resources for higher connectivity to regional and global value chains.

The Committee is invited to review the proposed monitoring and evaluation system and make comments thereon.

9. Arab States' exports: trends and patterns (E/ESCWA/C.6/2019/8)

The Committee will discuss the reasons behind the changes that occurred in export patterns since the adoption of the Pan-Arab Free Trade Area Agreement (PAFTA), in terms of targeted markets, product nature and stages of industrialization, during two reference periods: 1996-2016 and 2005-2016. It will

also examine the importance of devising national and regional policies that enable the creation of supply and value chains and contribute to their expansion.

The Committee is invited to express its views on ways to improve intraregional trade in the Arab region.

10. Towards modernization of the Pan-Arab Free Trade Area Agreement
(E/ESCWA/C.6/2019/9)

The Committee will review an assessment of the level of implementation of the Trade Facilitation and Development Agreement under PAFTA and discuss obstacles to its full implementation, including internal constraints imposed by a number of countries. The Committee will also examine a proposal on mechanisms to develop and update the Agreement to bring it into line with the current circumstances and challenges faced by Arab countries, and to help these countries benefit from its implementation.

The Committee is invited to make proposals on ways to develop PAFTA.

11. A tool to measure the impact of trade policies on selected Sustainable Development Goals
(Presentation by the ESCWA secretariat)

The Committee will be presented with a quantitative model that links trade policies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), focusing on selected indicators. The model was built on a preliminary social accounting matrix of a country on which data were available. It simulates the potential effects of selected trade policies on those indicators under different scenarios of trade negotiations which the sample country might carry out.

The Committee is invited to express its views on the proposed model and on ways to improve it.

Trade policies, economic integration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

12. Global trade wars: winners and losers in the Arab region (E/ESCWA/C.6/2019/10)

The Committee will discuss the challenges and opportunities posed by global trade wars on several Arab countries, based on the preliminary findings of a study undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat on the topic.

The Committee is invited to comment on the analysis and recommendations proposed by ESCWA in that regard.

13. Round-table discussion: Arab trade integration in a changing global trade landscape: what priorities of the Arab region?

The Committee will hold a round-table discussion on Arab trade integration and related options at the regional and multilateral levels. The discussion will tackle identification of possible trade scenarios under a fully operational Arab Customs Union that would help to advance SDG implementation, which requires effective participation in global value chains.

Representatives of ESCWA member States are invited to participate in the discussion.

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

The Committee will agree on the date and venue of its second 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 first session

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