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

Committee on Technology for Development  
First session  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 11-12 February 2017

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**Programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017  
in the field of technology for development**

**Summary**

The programme of work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the biennium 2016-2017 in the field of technology for development presents the activities and outputs related to the implementation of the expected accomplishments envisaged under subprogramme 4, "Technology for development and regional integration", of the strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017. The responsibility for implementing subprogramme 4 lies on the ESCWA Technology for Development Division.

The Committee on Technology for Development is invited to take note of the programme of work which has been semi-implemented to date.

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## SUBPROGRAMME 4. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION

### Programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017

#### A. OBJECTIVE

The objective of subprogramme 4 is to promote inclusive and sustainable development in member States by building an information society and knowledge economy that leverage technology and innovation in accordance with the regional development requirements and the internationally agreed development objectives.

#### B. EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(a) Member States develop or update strategies and policies that leverage human resources, innovation and modern technology towards a knowledge-based economy and information society as the new paradigm for employment and sustainable economic growth  <b>Strategic pillar: inclusive development</b> <b>Priority area: knowledge economy and employment</b>	(a) (i) Number of public institutions adopting strategies, road maps and/or solutions to foster technological innovation that enhance economic growth  (ii) Number of member States that develop or update strategies and policies that leverage information and communications technology (ICT) and innovation to enhance the impact on social and economic development
(b) Member States coordinate the implementation of harmonized policies and legal and regulatory frameworks in science, technology and innovation (STI) and ICT, to foster the development of regional platforms and services  <b>Strategic pillar: regional integration</b> <b>Priority area: policy coherence</b>	(b) (i) Number of member States implementing harmonized policies and legal and regulatory frameworks in STI and ICT  (ii) Number of regional STI and ICT initiatives that aim to build a knowledge society and encourage complementary partnerships for economic development in the Arab region
(c) Public institutions deploy ICT policies and e-government services based on good governance principles, with focus on open government in general and e-participation in particular  <b>Strategic pillar: good governance and resilience</b> <b>Priority area: institutional development</b>	(c) (i) Number of initiatives focusing on trends in e-government, such as open government and e-participation  (ii) Number of public institutions deploying open government and e-government services

### C. STRATEGY\*

19.47 The Technology for Development Division is responsible for the implementation of subprogramme 4. Technology and knowledge play a major role in the move towards a productive knowledge society. Recent technological advancements have modified the principles of economic growth and affected all economic sectors. The capacity of member States to adapt and contribute to ever-accelerating changes in technology and knowledge varies significantly. With the continued monitoring and implementation of activities pertaining to various sustainable development initiatives, such as the outcome document of Rio+20, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), WSIS+10, the ESCWA Regional Plan of Action for Building the Information Society and the Arab Information and Communications Technology Strategy of the League of Arab States, work under the subprogramme will help and guide member States in their transitions towards an information society and a knowledge economy.

19.48 To meet the development needs of member States, ESCWA will conduct analytical studies and offer policy recommendations, convene meetings, provide advisory services and implement development projects in partnership with national and regional stakeholders. The implementation of the subprogramme will enhance regional collaboration and foster partnerships aimed at harnessing research and development in technology, with an emphasis on ICT for socioeconomic development. ESCWA will act as a catalyst for change in national and regional policymaking and will help member States devise results-driven strategies. It will promote the adoption of comprehensive sets of measurement and indicators that will facilitate strategic decision-making and identify priority areas for policy formulation. ESCWA will also rely on feedback from member States and on regional and global benchmarking exercises to assess and revise plans of action, monitor progress and evaluate the impact of technology on national and regional economies. To help the countries of the region take advantage of the opportunities presented by advancements in technology and knowledge, ESCWA will undertake field projects that incorporate a social dimension, seek the active involvement of local communities, pay special attention to the employment needs of young people and advocate the empowerment of women.

19.49 More specifically, ESCWA will leverage technology to smooth the transition of the countries of the region towards knowledge economies and information society. It will focus on enhancing the competitiveness of technological sectors, creating enabling environments, promoting the development of innovative e-services and advocating the adoption and implementation of new trends in e-government, with a special emphasis on open government initiatives. The ESCWA Technology Centre (Amman) will assist production sectors, universities and research centres in member States to acquire the tools and capabilities to adapt and develop suitable technologies that are critical to solving sustainability challenges. To make ICT widely accessible throughout the region, ESCWA will encourage member States to enhance ICT infrastructure, implement a regional telecommunications backbone and reduce the cost of access to broadband and mobile services.

### D. EXTERNAL FACTORS

Subprogramme 4 will achieve its objective and expected accomplishments provided that: (a) the political situation in the region is conducive to socioeconomic development; (b) the security environment does not deteriorate; (c) member States have the capacity and commitment to reorient their economic and social structures and policies; (d) national institutions are willing to provide relevant and timely information; (e) adequate extrabudgetary resources are made available to support additional activities as needed; and (f) member States are committed to increasing subregional and regional cooperation and integration.

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\* The paragraphs under this heading "Strategy" are numbered from 19-47 to 19-49, where 19 indicates programme 19 concerning economic and social development in Western Asia, of the United Nations strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017; and 47 to 49 reflect the sequential numbering of the paragraphs contained which sets out all the United Nations programmes. This numbering is retained under the heading "Strategy" in the ESCWA programme of work and the programme of work of each of the seven subprogrammes.

## E. OUTPUTS

During the biennium 2016-2017, the following outputs will be delivered under subprogramme 4:

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

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

Parliamentary documentation:

- a. Activities of the ESCWA Technology Centre in the period 2014-2015;
- b. Progress achieved in implementing the Arab Internet Governance Forum (AIGF) process.

(ii) *Committee on Technology for Development*

Substantive servicing of the first session of the Committee on Technology for Development.

(iii) *Ad hoc expert groups*

- a. Mechanisms for advancing innovation for economic development in the Arab region;
- b. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Beyond 2015: strategic perspectives, selected priority issues and action plans for the Arab region;
- c. Internet governance beyond 2015: phase I;
- d. Internet governance beyond 2015: phase II.

(iv) *Assistance to intergovernmental bodies and/or United Nations representatives/rapporteurs under their established mandates*

Assistance to the League of Arab States and its organizations on information and communication technology policies and strategies, Internet governance, Arabic domain names, space and satellite technologies, digital Arabic content and science and innovation.

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

(i) *Non-recurrent publications*

- a. Technology for Development: Horizon 2030;
- b. Information Society and Digital Economy: Strategic Perspectives and Selected Priority Issues for the Arab Region;
- c. Innovation for Knowledge-based Economies in the Arab Region: Enhancing the Innovation Framework.

(ii) *Audio-visual resources*

- a. Webpage/applications on promoting digital Arabic content startups and entrepreneurs in the Arab region;
- b. Webpage on the information and communication sector and digital economy.

(iii) *Technical material*

- a. Selected priority areas for the peaceful use of space and satellite technology in the Arab region;
- b. Internet governance beyond 2015;
- c. Good innovative practices for improved public sector services;
- d. Smart governments and smart sectors for smart societies in the Arab region;
- e. Innovation landscape in the Arab region.

Annex

**LEGISLATIVE MANDATES**

**Subprogramme 4. Information and communications technology for regional integration**

*General Assembly resolutions*

- 60/252 World Summit on Information Society
- 66/121 Policies and programmes involving youth
- 66/211 Science and technology for development
- 67/113 International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space
- 67/195 Information and communication technology for development

*Economic and Social Council resolutions*

- 2009/8 Science and technology for development
- 2010/5 Establishment of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia Technology Centre
- 2013/6 Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations
- 2013/9 Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society

*ESCWA resolutions*

- 294 (XXVI) Establishment of the ESCWA technology centre
- 306 (XXVII) Development of the Arab Internet Governance Forum process and sustaining efforts in the Arabic domain names field
- 315 (XXVIII) Establishing an intergovernmental committee on technology for development

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