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REPORT

**ON THE THIRD MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION
KNOWLEDGE-SHARING NETWORK
BEIRUT, 28-30 SEPTEMBER 2010**

Summary

A meeting for members of the Technical Cooperation Knowledge-Sharing Network (TC Network) was organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) at the United Nations House in Beirut from 28 to 30 September 2010. Several officials and experts concerned with technical cooperation programmes in ESCWA member countries participated in the meeting, as well as a number of regional advisors within ESCWA, representatives of member country embassies in Beirut in addition to experts and officials from ESCWA.

The purpose of the meeting was to follow up on the implementation of recommendations made at the second meeting of the Technical Cooperation Knowledge-Sharing Network held in United Nations House in Beirut on 16-18 February 2009. Besides, the purpose of the meeting was to discuss means of coordination and cooperation between the TC Network and ESCWA, benefit from previous experiences, and take practical measures for the participation of the TC Network, as a fundamental and effective partner, in the implementation of technical cooperation activities. The meeting sought as well to review and discuss the priorities of member countries within the framework of each national plan of action.

The meeting included presentations and discussions on the expected outcomes, as well as a presentation of practical measures adopted by the TC Network members and ESCWA to implement the recommendations of the previous meeting, the modifications made to the Network website and the mechanism adopted by ESCWA to define a frame for national plans of actions for the biennium 2010-2011. Network members from Oman, Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen gave visual presentations on the main achievements of regional advisors missions to their respective countries, and national technical cooperation workshops organized in 2009.

In parallel with the meeting, regional advisors gave visual presentations on the Summit on the Millennium Development Goals, held at the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York from 20 to 22 September 2010, and on e-Government, stressing the need to coordinate between governmental bodies to define, follow up on the implementation and benefit from technical cooperation requests.

This report briefly reviews the key discussions held at the meeting and recommendations made.

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Introduction

1. The third meeting of the Technical Cooperation Knowledge-sharing Network (TC Network) was held in Beirut from 28 to 30 September 2010 to follow up on the implemented recommendations of the second meeting. It also aimed to discuss challenges facing TC Network members in the implementation of recommendations, as well as ways to overcome them to maintain business continuity. The meeting focused on national plans of action for technical cooperation and ways to identify the priorities of member countries within the ESCWA technical cooperation programme.
2. The meeting included sessions on the outcomes of the Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) held at the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York from 20 to 22 September 2010, and on e-Government. Sessions included presentations and discussions which contributed to raising the awareness of TC Network members about amendments made to align the orientations of MDGs with national priorities. Furthermore, sessions stressed the importance of coordination among governmental bodies to unify efforts and optimize the benefits of technical cooperation activities, notably in e-Government.

I. OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The presentations and discussions of the meeting reached several recommendations on promoting coordination and cooperation between TC Network members and ESCWA, and exploring ways to benefit from national technical cooperation services in the light of existing national plans of action for technical cooperation for the biennium 2010-2011. Participants addressed their recommendations to ESCWA secretariat and TC Network members, as follows:

A. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ESCWA SECRETARIAT

4. Participants addressed the following recommendations to ESCWA secretariat:
 - (a) Review and reformulate the technical cooperation form in a simplified and more accurate manner;
 - (b) Prepare a detailed list of advisory services that are regularly provided by ESCWA;
 - (c) Identify the roles and responsibilities of ESCWA Technical Committee and TC Network, and strengthen coordination between the focal points of ESCWA subcommittees and TC Network members;
 - (d) Provide TC Network members with enough time to study priorities;
 - (e) Finalize and regularly update the TC Network website with information;
 - (f) Strengthen the exchange of expertise between TC Network members to benefit from the successful experiences of member countries;
 - (g) Adopt clear guidelines for the responsibilities of focal points;
 - (h) Prepare a biannual report on ESCWA technical cooperation activities and action taken to implement recommendations;
 - (i) Call upon ESCWA to sponsor national workshops aimed at introducing ESCWA tasks and available possibilities for technical cooperation;
 - (j) Expedite the implementation of technical cooperation and advisory services requests;
 - (k) Underline the need to publish ESCWA literature in Arabic;
 - (l) Call upon ESCWA to send a weekly bulletin to focal points to keep them abreast of activities including organizing training sessions and workshops and providing advisory services;

(m) Notify focal points in every country of all advisory requests submitted by or related to governmental bodies if they are directly sent to ESCWA;

(n) Notify focal points in the concerned member country of all advisory missions organized by ESCWA.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS TO TC NETWORK MEMBERS IN MEMBER COUNTRIES

5. The secretariat of ESCWA addressed several recommendations to TC Network members in member countries, as follows:

(a) Continue to coordinate between TC Network members to exchange knowledge and benefit from successful experiences in member countries;

(b) Coordinate with stakeholders at the national level and in ESCWA to identify the priorities of member countries and implement technical cooperation requests.

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

6. Participants reviewed the items on the meeting agenda and the implementation of recommendations approved at the second meeting of TC Network held in Beirut from 16 to 18 February 2009. The meeting included presentations made by TC Network members from Oman, Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen about their country experience in organizing national workshops on technical cooperation and multidisciplinary missions of regional advisors. Presentations were followed by discussions where participants gave their comments and proposals that were taken into account while formulating the final recommendations of the meeting.

A. EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

7. Ms. Ramla Khalidi, Chief of the Technical Cooperation Section (TCS) at the Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation Division (PPTCD) in ESCWA, gave a presentation on the meeting objectives which include:

(a) Review the implemented recommendations of the second meeting of TC Network and implemented activities;

(b) Discuss ways to strengthen coordination and cooperation between TC Network members and ESCWA to develop their relation and build on past experiences;

(c) Take practical action to consolidate coordination and cooperation for the implementation of technical cooperation activities in member countries with a focus on results.

8. Ms. Khalidi summarized the expected outcomes of the meeting, as follows:

(a) Develop a mechanism to strengthen communication and coordination between member countries and ESCWA;

(b) Develop national plans for technical cooperation with ESCWA concerned divisions and regional advisors by TC Network members in order to adopt an executive plan of action for the biennium 2010-2011;

(c) Discuss obstacles and challenges faced by member countries and ESCWA in implementing the recommendations of the last TC Network meeting.

9. Ms. Khalidi discussed in detail the national plan of action of ESCWA technical cooperation programme for the biennium 2010-2011, which focuses on developing a preliminary programme of action to implement member country requests. Below is the general framework developed by ESCWA, and action taken to develop a vision for the mechanism of national plans:

- (a) Collect requests of member countries;
- (b) Study requests submitted by the concerned divisions of ESCWA and the Technical Cooperation Section to incorporate them into the strategic priorities and plans of action;
- (c) Develop a vision for the implementation of requests in accordance with available resources and specializations, including the required budget for implementation;
- (d) Send the plan to focal points in member countries to discuss them with beneficiaries;
- (e) Approve the preliminary plan of implementation;
- (f) Conduct any amendments made to the plan in coordination with beneficiaries.

10. Ms. Khalidi underlined the flexibility of national plans of action which may be amended based on the needs of member countries, and specified the desired specifications of the national plan of action, as follows:

- (a) Organize missions and assign regional advisors to member countries on an expeditious basis;
- (b) Provide enough time to arrange contracts with highly competent experts from outside (on short-term basis);
- (c) Increase intersectoral integration and assign multidisciplinary work teams to a single mission.

B. PRACTICAL ACTION TAKEN BY ESCWA AND TC NETWORK MEMBERS TO IMPLEMENT
THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND MEETING OF TC NETWORK

1. *Action taken by ESCWA*

- (a) Send letters to the competent ministries of member countries including the names of TC Network focal points at ESCWA;
- (b) Refer the notification of focal points of the agreed projects to the United Nations Development Account;
- (c) Review the design of TC Network website, add country-specific websites and upload information;
- (d) Promote communication between ESCWA and focal points by sending copies of letters exchanged between ESCWA and beneficiaries in member countries to focal points to keep them informed of joint activities;
- (e) Organize regular visits of focal points from Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen to brief them on the work programme and subprogrammes of ESCWA, and on the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation;
- (f) Sign contracts with six regional advisors in the priority specializations of member countries in the fields of water, environment, social policies, macroeconomics, information and communications technology, social statistics and gender issues; and create a database of experts from the region in all ESCWA-related fields.

2. Action taken by TC Network members in member countries

11. ESCWA requested TC Network members/focal points to notify it of actions taken by member countries to implement recommendations. ESCWA received replies from 11 out of 14 countries. Below is the summary of the implementation status of recommendations:

(a) Coordinate with stakeholders to meet the requirements of requests of technical cooperation and advisory services;

(b) Modify the design of TC Network website and update it with country-specific and other information;

(c) Continue the coordination between governmental bodies and ESCWA to implement and follow up on requests of technical cooperation and advisory services;

(d) Invite several TC Network members to contribute to the development of a database of national, regional and international experts by requesting national experts to send their resumes to consider incorporating them into the database and benefit from their expertise in the implementation of programmes;

(e) Exchange expertise and successful experiences by TC Network members in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Oman and Palestine with regard to the Palestinian Geographic Centre (PALGRIC); and submit a proposal to transfer the successful experiences of some countries in several fields to the other member countries;

(f) Identify national needs and priorities in the field of technical cooperation and capacity-building by offering assistance to organize national workshops to raise national awareness about the objectives of the technical cooperation knowledge-sharing programme and ways to benefit from it to identify requests and priorities such as the national workshop organized for Palestine in December 2009.

C. CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

12. Participants organized three working groups to discuss challenges and obstacles faced by TC Network members and ESCWA in implementing the recommendations of the second meeting of TC Network, which include:

(a) Lack of accuracy of several recommendations formulated at the second meeting;

(b) The need for a well-established relation between ESCWA subsidiary bodies and TC Network members;

(c) National coordination at the country level;

(d) The need for a clear and accurate definition of advisory services and ESCWA services;

(e) Delays in the provision of some advisory services;

(f) Insufficient time to identify priorities and send relevant requests to stakeholders for implementation.

D. TASKS OF TC NETWORK MEMBERS

13. Participants discussed the tasks of TC Network members in their capacity as focal points between governmental bodies and ESCWA that are in charge of following up on the implementation of the activities and services of the technical cooperation programme. They agreed that ESCWA prepares a draft paper on the tasks of TC Network members and submits it to the members for comments. Below are the most important tasks mentioned in the draft paper:

(a) Review national coordination by communicating with competent ministries about requests of technical cooperation activities;

(b) Receive technical cooperation requests from stakeholders and assist governmental bodies to meet the requirements of technical cooperation requests as they should be aligned with ESCWA tasks and capacity;

(c) Contribute to the evaluation of advisory services provided by ESCWA and their follow-up with beneficiaries;

(d) Cooperate with beneficiaries to identify technical cooperation priorities and develop a preliminary strategy in the light of the general framework of the technical cooperation programme and ESCWA scope of action.

E. PRESENTATIONS

1. *Presentations of member countries*

14. The meeting included presentations and discussions about the different activities of the technical cooperation programme, especially the collective tasks of regional advisors and the national workshops on technical cooperation. TC Network members from Oman, Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen gave presentations about their country experience and lessons learnt from provided services.

15. Mr. Mahmoud Ataya from Palestine discussed the national workshop on technical cooperation, organized in cooperation with ESCWA and held at the Dead Sea, Jordan from 19 to 21 December 2009.

16. Ms. Amani Zabara and Ms. Nabawia Mohamed Mahgoub Abdallah presented the experiences of the Sudan and Yemen with regard to the multidisciplinary missions of regional advisors. The mission to the Sudan took place from 23 to 25 February 2010 and the mission to Yemen from 26 to 30 July 2010.

17. Ms. Suaad Bin Mohamed Al Fadhil gave a detailed presentation on the history of technical cooperation between Oman and ESCWA in several fields and the lessons learnt from relevant activities.

18. Participants were distributed into working groups where they discussed challenges, obstacles and solutions as well as the mechanisms needed to strengthen cooperation between ESCWA and focal points. Following discussions, participants reached several recommendations.

2. *Presentations of ESCWA regional advisors*

19. Mr. Adib Nehmeh, Regional Advisor on Social Statistics at ESCWA, gave a detailed presentation on the outcomes of the Summit on the Millennium Development Goals and focused on future orientations in as far as they relate to the Summit outcomes.

20. Mr. Saleem Zoughbi, Regional Advisor on Information and Communications Technology at ESCWA, gave a presentation about e-Government and ways to use it as a means to coordinate between governmental bodies.

21. In parallel with the meeting, TC Network members, regional advisors at ESCWA, representatives of the substantive divisions and the team of the Technical Cooperation Section (TCS) held meetings to review national plans of action and follow up on the implementation of technical cooperation requests.

F. WEBSITE OF TC NETWORK

22. The meeting also included a presentation on amendments made to the TC Network website, including a country-specific portal that allows focal points to follow up on requests, national plans of action, and reports of advisory missions after filling out the registration form. ESCWA representative explained how to use, browse and display the website content. Relevant information already started to be uploaded, and ESCWA will amend, update and enrich the website with materials as needed.

G. EVALUATION OF THE MEETING

23. The meeting was evaluated based on the survey outcomes collected from the evaluation forms that were distributed to participants after the meeting. The evaluation form contained questions about the meeting topics and organizational aspects. The annex, entitled “Analysis of the Evaluation Outcomes”, shows that ESCWA received 23 forms which can be summarized as follows:

- (a) The meeting achieved several expected outcomes;
- (b) The meeting was an opportunity to strengthen cooperation between ESCWA and member countries;
- (c) The presentations given and written materials distributed at the meeting were generally good;
- (d) Participants agreed on keeping the meeting duration unchanged, amending the agenda, increasing the time of discussion of sectoral issues and topics, amending the duration of bilateral sessions and working groups, and focusing on priority issues for member countries in the technical cooperation programme;
- (e) Stakeholders called for stronger participation by regional advisors and the substantive divisions at ESCWA;
- (f) Participants called for avoiding the topics already addressed in previous meetings;
- (g) Participants called for a follow-up on the implementation of their recommendations and obligations.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. DATE AND VENUE

24. The Third Meeting of the Technical Cooperation Knowledge-sharing Network (TC Network) was held at the United Nations House in Beirut from 28 to 30 September 2010.

B. OPENING OF THE MEETING

25. Mr. Roberto Laurenti, Director of the Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation Division (PPTCD) at ESCWA, delivered the opening statement and welcomed participants from the TC Network member countries as well as embassy representatives of member countries in Beirut. Mr. Laurenti stated that this meeting provides participants with a valuable opportunity to be informed about ESCWA expertise and capacities in technical cooperation, to discuss national plans of action, to identify country needs and demands, and to suggest a general framework of cooperation with countries.

26. In this context, Mr. Laurenti introduced a list of services and expertise provided by the technical cooperation programme of ESCWA, noting that regional advisors and substantive divisions are regularly updating, developing and changing the list in accordance with regional and national priorities. Moreover, Mr. Laurenti mentioned that ESCWA should update the database of highly competent experts and specialists in order to supplement its internal expertise with additional skills needed to respond to the requests of member countries for technical cooperation.

27. Mr. Laurenti noted that this meeting is held at a time when Ms. Rima Khalaf is appointed as Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCWA, as a successor to Mr. Bader Omar Al Dafa. He added that Ms. Khalaf, through her regional and international experience, will pursue the same course of action initiated by Mr. Al Dafa to promote cooperation with member countries in accordance with a strategic plan of action that aims to meet the needs of member countries. Besides, he emphasized that this course of action will continue in line with ESCWA fields of action to identify the cross-sectoral needs of member countries, thereby positively planning available services and resources at ESCWA in accordance with the needs and priorities of member countries. In this context, the team of the Technical Cooperation Section prepared national plans of action based on requests submitted to ESCWA. He also underlined the flexibility of national plans of action and the readiness to adjust them to any request that may result from potential changes in member countries.

28. Mr. Laurenti noted that further multidisciplinary advisory missions will be implemented to achieve the following objectives:

- (a) Promoting inter-sectoral interaction to address complicated issues;
- (b) Strengthening the efficient use of available human and financial resources;
- (c) Strengthening the impact of ESCWA actions;
- (d) Enhancing coordination and cooperation with the United Nations agencies and organizations in member countries.

29. Mr. Laurenti added that this meeting is important as it allows participants to develop a roadmap of action for the coming year by reviewing and discussing national plans of action with regional advisors at ESCWA as well as specialized experts in substantive divisions, and by discussing a plan of action that guides ESCWA and TC network focal points to strengthen means of coordination and cooperation.

C. PARTICIPANTS

30. Several focal points/members of the TC Network concerned with technical cooperation programmes in member countries as well as regional advisors and experts specialized in different fields at ESCWA participated in the meeting. The list of participants is included in annex I of this report.

D. AGENDA

31. Below are the items listed on the meeting agenda:

- 1. Review the implementation of recommendations of the second meeting of TC Network.
- 2. Discuss obstacles and challenges facing member countries and ESCWA in the implementation of recommendations.
- 3. Discuss methods and mechanisms aimed at implementing recommendations and developing the relation between TC Network members and ESCWA.
- 4. Give detailed presentations about the following topics:
 - (a) Outcomes of the United Nations General Assembly meeting on the Millennium Development Goals;
 - (b) E-Government.
- 5. Present the TC Network website and discuss ways to activate it.

6. Discuss the collective tasks of regional advisors at ESCWA with focal points.
7. Form working groups to explore ways of technical cooperation with focal points to implement national plans of action with ESCWA.
8. Develop an implementation mechanism for the national plans of action for the biennium 2010-2011.

E. DOCUMENTS

32. The list of documents presented at the meeting is included in annex III of this report.

Annex I*

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Annex II

EVALUATION OF THE MEETING

QUESTION # 1	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	No Answer
How do you generally evaluate the meeting quality?	0.0	8.7	17.4	43.5	30.4	0.0
QUESTION # 2	Yes	No	To Some Extent			
What were your expectations from the meeting?						
QUESTION # 3	Yes	No	Partially	No Answer		
Were your expectations met?	39.1	8.7	47.8	4.3		
QUESTION # 4						
How do you evaluate the meeting importance from the following aspects?						
QUESTION # 4a	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	No Answer
How important is the topic to your field of work and expertise?	0.0	8.7	17.4	43.5	30.4	0.0
QUESTION # 4b	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	No Answer
What are the acquired skills and information that may help you at work in the future?	0.0	8.7	39.1	21.7	26.1	4.3
QUESTION # 4c	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	No Answer
Did the meeting allow for an exchange of information with other participants?	0.0	8.7	26.1	47.8	17.4	0.0
QUESTION # 4d	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	No Answer
Did the meeting allow for good and useful networking?	0.0	17.4	34.8	26.1	21.7	0.0
QUESTION # 4e	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	No Answer
How much did you benefit from the exchange of expertise and experience between participants?	0.0	13.0	30.4	47.8	8.7	0.0
QUESTION # 5	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	No Answer
How do you evaluate the meeting from the following aspects?						
QUESTION # 5a	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	No Answer
Clarity of presentations	0.0	13.0	8.7	52.2	26.1	0.0

QUESTION # 5b	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	No Answer
Quality of written materials distributed by organizers/organizations	0.0	17.4	17.4	47.8	17.4	0.0
QUESTION # 5c	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	No Answer
Organizational arrangements prior to and during the meeting	0.0	13.0	26.1	39.1	21.7	0.0
QUESTION # 6	Shorter	As is	Longer	No Answer		
The meeting duration should have been:	13.0	78.3	8.7	0.0		
QUESTION # 7	Yes	No	To Some Extent	No Answer		
Will you make use of the acquired information when you return to your workplace or share it with other specialists in your country or community?	69.6	0.0	30.4	0.0		
QUESTION # 8	Yes	No	To Some Extent	No Answer		
Would you recommend other specialists from your country or field of work to attend similar meetings in the future?	60.9	13.0	21.7	4.3		
QUESTION # 9a	Yes	No	No Answer			
Did you participate in activities about the same topic in other organizations?	26.1	69.6	4.3			
QUESTION # 9b	Yes	No	No Answer			
Would you like follow-up meetings to be held?	73.9	21.7	4.3			

Annex III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Title	Symbol
Statement of Mr. Roberto Laurenti, Director of the Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation Division (PPTCD)	No symbol
Provisional agenda	No symbol
Information note	No symbol
List of participants	No symbol
Report of the preparatory meeting on “Establishing a Technical Cooperation Network for the Exchange of Knowledge”, Cairo, 28-30 October 2007 (Arabic only)	E/ESCWA/PPTCD/2007/WG.1/3
Background paper on the preparatory meeting on “Establishing a Technical Cooperation Network for the Exchange of Knowledge”, Cairo, 28-30 October 2007 (Arabic only)	E/ESCWA/PPTCD/2007/WG.1/2
Report on the second meeting of the Technical Cooperation Knowledge-Sharing Network, Beirut, 16-18 February 2009	E/ESCWA/PPTCD/2009/1
Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission: The Technical Cooperation Programme and Regional Advisory Services: Activities under the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation, Item 6 (c-i) of the provisional agenda, twenty-sixth session, Beirut, 17-20 May 2010	E/ESCWA/26/5(Part III)/A
Report on the twenty-third session 9-12 May 2005	E/2005/41 E/ESCWA/23/10
Report on the twenty-fifth session 26-29 May 2008	E/ESCWA/25/10/Rev.1
Overview of the Advisory Services offered in 2010	No symbol
Presentations of member countries	
1. Experience of Oman with ESCWA in Technical Cooperation, Technical Cooperation Department at the Ministry of National Economy	
2. Technical Cooperation between Palestine and ESCWA, Lessons Learnt, Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development	No symbol
3. Technical Cooperation Programme between the Sudan and ESCWA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
4. Multidisciplinary Advisory Mission to the Republic of Yemen from 26 to 30 June 2010, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation	

Title	Symbol
Presentations of the Technical Cooperation Section	
1. Plan of the Technical Cooperation Programme 2010-2011	No symbol
2. Implementation of measures taken by ESCWA and member countries	