Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Twenty-third session
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Item 7 (a-ii) of the provisional agenda

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION

FOLLOW-UP TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED
BY THE COMMISSION AT ITS TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

Consideration of the Establishment within the Economic and Social Commission
for Western Asia of a United Nations Arabic Language Centre:
resolution 239 (XXII)

1. At its twenty-second session, the Commission adopted resolution 239 (XXII) in which it called upon
the secretariat to consider the establishment of a United Nations Arabic Language Centre whose objective
shall be to raise the technical and linguistic level of the Arabic terminology used in United Nations
documents, through facilitating the use of the Arabic language in such documents; and to establish a
committee responsible for determining the competences of the aforementioned Centre.

2. Since the adoption of the Commission resolution, the ESCWA Conference Services Section has
developed an ESCWA internal database on Arabic terminology. The database is available to external users
on the ESCWA website. ESCWA developed an Arabic glossary of development terms and formulated a
project proposal on an information and communication technology e-glossary. It also rendered advisory
services to the Arab Organization for Translation and Arab Union of Translators and contributed to a series
of capacity-building workshops on issues related to digital Arabic language content and archiving. ESCWA
has also participated in the formulation of terms of reference for the creation of an Arab Language
Organization in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau of Arab
States.

3. Pursuant to the aforementioned resolution, the ESCWA secretariat has undertaken the following
activities:

   (a) The Executive Secretary initiated consultations with the Under-Secretary-General for General
       Assembly Affairs and Conference Management on the objective and financial and administrative
       implications of the proposed Centre;

   (b) The Executive Secretary set up a Task Force on the Consideration of the Establishment of the
       Centre;

   (c) The Task Force prepared a concept paper for the first phase of the project, which was submitted
       by ESCWA to the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management;

   (d) The Task Force also recommended the carrying out of a feasibility study to define clearly the
       scope of the Centre and to develop a practical plan of action for its implementation.

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