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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Twenty-sixth session
Beirut, 17-20 May 2010

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

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ANNOTATIONS

1. Opening of the twenty-sixth session

The twenty-sixth session of the Commission will comprise two segments, namely, the Senior Officials' segment, which will be inaugurated at 10 a.m. on Monday 17 May 2010; and the Ministerial segment, which will be inaugurated at 10 a.m. on Wednesday 19 May 2010 in the main Conference Hall at the United Nations House in Beirut under the auspices of his Excellency, Mr. Nabih Berri, Speaker of the House of Lebanon. All meetings of the session will be held at the United Nations House.

2. Election of officers

Pursuant to rule 12 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, member countries shall assume the chairmanship of the sessions of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations. At the beginning of each session, the Commission shall elect from among the representatives of its members a Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur, who shall remain in office until such time as their successors shall be elected and be eligible for re-election. The chairmanship of the twenty-sixth session shall be assumed by Jordan since Yemen assumed the chairmanship of the twenty-fifth session, while the Commission elected the representatives of Jordan and Qatar as Vice-Chairmen and the representative of Palestine as Rapporteur.

3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Pursuant to the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, rule 8, paragraph 1, the Commission shall, at the beginning of each session, after the election of the Chairman according to rule 12, adopt the agenda for that session. The provisional agenda was drawn up by the Executive Secretary of ESCWA in consultation with the Chairman of the twenty-fifth session and the Technical Committee, a body composed of Senior Officials from member countries which held its fourth meeting in Beirut on 26 and 27 January 2010. The Commission will have before it the provisional agenda and annotations in document E/ESCWA/26/L.1, and the organization of work in document E/ESCWA/26/L.2. The Commission may adopt these two documents in the form in which they were submitted or make amendments thereto.

4. Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to participate as observers in the twenty-sixth session of the Commission (E/ESCWA/26/3)

The Commission will have before it the requests received from States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of the Commission to participate in the capacity of observer in the twenty-sixth session of the Commission, in accordance with Economic and Social Council Resolution 1818 (LV), paragraph 4, and the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, rule 63.

5. Policy issues in the ESCWA region (E/ESCWA/26/4)

This agenda item consists of two salient issues for the ESCWA region which will be considered by the Commission in two round table discussions:

(a) Youth in the Arab world: challenges and opportunities

Following the endorsement of the Technical Committee at its fourth meeting (Beirut, 26-27 January 2010) of the proposal made by the secretariat as to the issues of the twenty-sixth session of the

Commission, the role of youth was selected to be a main theme for this session. A round table in this view entitled “youth in the Arab world: challenges and opportunities” will bring together heads of delegations, and high-level speakers and experts on the issue of the youth, as well as youth organizations and bodies.

The Commission raises this issue in view of its importance to the countries of the region, particularly in the context of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) to the year 2000 and Beyond adopted by the United Nations in 1995. The World Youth Programme defines fifteen priorities reflecting guidelines for decision makers in defining policies and strategies aimed at youth and the best use of their capacities, as they are considered to be human resources and essential factors of change and social and economic development. These priorities defined through the participation of youth themselves are: globalization, hunger and poverty, education, employment, environment, leisure time activities, the full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making, intergenerational issues, information and communications technology, health, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, girls and young women and armed conflicts. These priorities assist in empowering youth, positively assimilating their dynamism and mitigating the severity of social exclusion undergone by this category.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations had proposed in his report “Goals and Targets for Monitoring the Progress of Youth in the Global Economy”, presented to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session (2007) a set of goals and targets to follow-up the progress of youth as to the following priorities: globalization, poverty and hunger, education, and employment in view of its tight link with all other priorities. Those goals and targets were separated from the previous framework of the Millennium Development Goals. Defining a set of clear goals and targets in a specific time frame is expected to assist in formulating national work programmes for the development of youth and providing better opportunities to evaluate the progress made on the national level.

Document E/ESCWA/26/4(Part I) on National youth policies within the frame of the World Programme of Action for Youth will be presented for discussion in the round table.

The round table will be an opportunity for a constructive dialogue between Lebanese youth and ministers participating in the session on main developmental issues in the region.

(b) Human and institutional capacity-building (E/ESCWA/26/4(Part II))

The Commission will consider this issue in a round table that brings together heads of delegations and high-level speakers and experts. The development of human and institutional capacities aims at enhancing good management practice and principles in public sector institutions, on both local and central levels. This approach is based on the principle that enhancing efficient management in the public sector assists in providing appropriate services, improving living standards and livelihoods of all citizens, and reducing potential conflicts and instability.

Good governance is set to secure the use of public resources in an efficient, transparent and accountable way to ensure peace and stability. It also makes use of local capacities in order to enhance the capacity of the State to deal with developmental challenges and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Member countries are invited to discuss their needs in the field of capacity-building within their institutions to define strategies aimed to improve basic services and livelihoods.

The secretariat will present in the round table a document on challenges related to the modernization of the public sector in the ESCWA region, dealing with the importance of building institutional capacities in member countries. The study tackles the aspects countries need to focus on to improve the efficiency of providing basic needs, in addition to the different approaches in modernizing the public sector in member countries in view of their individual circumstances and conditions.

6. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission (E/ESCWA/26/5)

The Commission will have before it the following five reports:

(a) Programme performance report for the biennium 2008-2009 (E/ESCWA/26/5(Part I))

This report presents an overall evaluation of the work programme performance of ESCWA for the biennium 2008-2009, highlights the results achieved in the seven subprogrammes and sheds light on the obstacles and challenges that were faced in their implementation. It also includes the amendments introduced into the work programme. The Commission is requested to review the document and give guidance regarding the general performance of the seven subprogrammes.

(b) Follow-up to implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-fifth session (E/ESCWA/26/5(Part II))

This report includes a follow-up to the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-fifth session (Sana'a, 26-29 May 2008) concerning the different fields of action of ESCWA and various issues and themes of importance to member countries. The Commission is invited to present achievements in view of the following resolutions:

- (i) Resolution 280 (XXV): Request from the Sudan to become a member of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia;
- (ii) Resolution 281 (XXV): Addressing climate change issues in the Arab region;
- (iii) Resolution 282 (XXV): Mitigating the impact on development of conflict, occupation and instability in ESCWA member countries;
- (iv) Resolution 283 (XXV): ESCWA member country compliance with international standards for enhancing national statistical systems;
- (v) Resolution 284 (XXV): Establishment of the ESCWA regional technology centre;
- (vi) Resolution 285 (XXV): Integrated social policy;
- (vii) Resolution 286 (XXV): Gender statistics for equality and empowerment of women;
- (viii) Resolution 287 (XXV): Strengthening statistical capacities for evidence-based policymaking;
- (ix) Resolution 288 (XXV): Establishing an Arabic language centre at ESCWA;
- (x) Resolution 289 (XXV): Supporting the comprehensive development efforts of Yemen;
- (xi) Resolution 290 (XXV): Call for regional action to accelerate implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in Western Asia;
- (xii) Resolution 291 (XXV): Frequency of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

(c) Technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services (E/ESCWA/26/5(Part III))

Under this item, a comprehensive review will be given on the technical cooperation activities undertaken by ESCWA within the framework of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation and the United Nations Development Account.

The Commission will have before it two documents. The first E/ESCWA/26/5(Part III)/A includes an overview of activities funded by the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation aimed to enhance

capacity-building in member countries through organizing training activities and offering advisory services and technical assistance in formulating policies, strategies and plans of action in various specializations. The first document covers as well the results of activities implemented upon the request of member countries in the framework of the Regular Programme. The second document E/ESCWA/26/5(Part III)/B reviews intraregional and interregional projects funded by the United Nations Development Account. The progress made in this regard is reflected in the expected accomplishments under the seven subprogrammes.

(d) Financial status of the Commission (E/ESCWA/26/5(Part IV))

This report reviews the various financial aspects of the programmes of the Commission, including the regular budget, extrabudgetary resources and the ESCWA Trust Fund for Regional Activities.

The secretariat invites member countries, and donor funds, organizations and agencies to contribute to the extrabudgetary resources in order to support the activities and projects of ESCWA and enable it to continue meeting the increasing demands and needs of member countries.

(e) Reports of the Commission subsidiary bodies on their sessions (E/ESCWA/26/5(Part V))

The Commission will have before it the complete reports of the seven subsidiary bodies on their sessions which were held between the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions of the Commission as well as the reports of the Technical Committee on its meetings held during the same period. In addition to the recommendations, the reports cover the issues discussed, information on the organization of those sessions, lists of participants and documents presented therein. Those reports are:

- (i) Report of the Statistical Committee on its eighth session (E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG.1/9);
- (ii) Report of the Committee on Energy on its seventh session (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2009/IG.1/7);
- (iii) Report of the Committee on Social Development on its seventh session (E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/IG.1/6);
- (iv) Report of the Committee on Women on its fourth session (E/ESCWA/ECW/2009/IG.1/7);
- (v) Report of the Technical Committee on its third session (E/ESCWA/2009/C.3/6);
- (vi) Report of the Committee on Water Resources on its eighth session (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2008/IG.1/7);
- (vii) Report of the Committee on Transport on its tenth session (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2009/IG.1/8);
- (viii) Report of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region on its sixth session (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2009/IG.2/7);
- (ix) Report of the Technical Committee on its fourth session (E/ESCWA/2010/C.4/9/Report);
- (x) Report of the Committee on Transport on its eleventh session (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2010/IG.1/8/Report).

7. Management Issues (E/ESCWA/26/6)

Under this item, the following reports are presented to the Commission:

(a) Streamlining the work of the Commission (E/ESCWA/26/6(Part I))

(i) Evaluation of the intergovernmental structure of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies

Under this item, the outcome of the evaluation of the intergovernmental structure of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies will be presented pursuant to resolution 291 (XXV) on the Frequency of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, in which the Commission called upon the secretariat to carry out an in-depth evaluation of the intergovernmental structure of ESCWA in the light of both programme priorities, as identified by member countries and ongoing United Nations reform. ESCWA comprises seven subsidiary bodies namely: the Committee on Water Resources, the Committee on Energy, the Committee on Social Development, the Committee on Transport, the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region, the Statistical Committee and the Committee on Women.

Document E/ESCWA/26/6(Part I)/A reviews the lessons learned from the evaluation of the sessions of the Commission and its seven subsidiary bodies on the basis of the outcome of the assessment made for eight sessions held during the period from February 2008 to December 2009.

(ii) Upgrade the Centre for Women in ESCWA to a division (E/ESCWA/26/6(Part I)/B)

This document includes a proposal to upgrade the Centre for Women in ESCWA, which is responsible for subprogramme 6 on the Advancement of Women, to a division, following the example of other subprogrammes. The document reviews main achievements of the Centre in the field of advancement of women, empowering them and enhancing their role in various developmental fields. The extent of work of the centre is expanding, so are its tasks and the issues it deals with in compliance with the General Assembly resolutions and priorities of member countries. The document presents as well a prospective vision of subprogramme 6, challenges and obstacles facing it, in addition to necessary human and financial resources needed to increase its efficiency and meet the increasing needs of member countries in the field of enhancement of gender equality and empowerment of women.

The Commission is requested to consider this proposal and, if in agreement, adopt it.

(iii) Upgrade the Section on Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues to a division and establish an intergovernmental committee concerned with emerging issues and development in times of crises (E/ESCWA/26/6(Part I)/C)

This document includes a proposal on upgrading the Section on Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues, which is responsible for subprogramme 7 on Conflict Mitigation and Development, to a division, following the example of other subprogrammes. The document reviews main achievements of the section as well as expanding tasks and issues it deals with based on the General Assembly resolutions and priorities of member countries, in particular human and institutional capacity-building. The document presents as well a prospective vision of subprogramme 7, challenges and obstacles facing it, in addition to necessary human and financial resources needed to increase its efficiency, meet the increasing needs of member countries and develop strategic approaches to face current and future regional challenges as well as the requirements of development under unstable conditions in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in countries of the ESCWA region.

The proposal comprises the establishment of an intergovernmental subsidiary committee on emerging issues and development under crises, and the terms of reference of this committee based on the

findings of the working group established to this end following a recommendation of the third meeting of the Technical Committee.

The Commission is requested to consider this proposal and, if in agreement, adopt it.

(b) Proposed amendments to the work programme for the biennium 2010-2011 (E/ESCWA/26/6(Part II))

This document contains the proposed amendments to the work programme for the biennium 2010-2011 in the light of unexpected issues at the global and regional levels.

The Commission is requested to consider the proposed amendments to the work programme and, if in agreement, adopt them.

8. Revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013 (E/ESCWA/26/7)

The Commission will consider the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013 which comprises an overview of ESCWA programme of work, as well as the strategy, targets, expected achievements and performance indicators for each of the seven subprogrammes. In preparing the revised draft strategic framework, the secretariat took into consideration new priorities at the global and regional levels and the proposals of member countries made at the fourth meeting of the Technical Committee (Beirut, 26-27 January 2010).

The Commission is requested to review the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013, to give guidance thereon and adopt it.

The Commission will also have before it document E/ESCWA/OES/2009/WG.1/3, which contains the report of the Expert Group Meeting on Moving the Development Agenda Forward: Opportunities and Potential Gains, held in Beirut on 5 and 6 November 2009. The meeting was devoted to addressing salient development issues on the global and regional levels of direct impact on the future of the region. Studies and following discussions focused on three main topics, namely: climate change and sustainable management of natural resources, youth and opportunities of investment and employment, and regional integration for social and economic development purposes. Participants discussed, along these main regional and global issues, developmental priorities of the region that could be focused on during the 2012-2013 biennium.

The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

9. Progress made in the establishment of ESCWA technology centre (E/ESCWA/26/8)

The report includes an overview of the progress made in establishing ESCWA technology centre and completed phases in this field. The Commission adopted the resolution of the establishment of the Centre at its twenty-fifth session (resolution 284 (XXV) dated 29 May 2008). In support to this resolution, ESCWA carried a set of procedures for the actual establishment of the centre such as holding consultations with concerned entities in member countries, choosing the host country and preparing official documents for the agreement between ESCWA and the host country.

ESCWA technology centre aims at building national and regional capacities in fields of science, technology and innovation, in order to achieve economic and social development, increase development rates, competitiveness and economic diversification, create working opportunities, fight poverty, and improve performance in the field of empowerment of women. The centre will undertake those tasks through focusing on priority fields based on the urging needs of the region that are

currently being agreed. It will also be the link between countries of the region in the field of transfer of technology to both public and private sectors.

The Commission is requested to take note of the progress made in the establishment of the centre and to take appropriate measures.

10. Date and venue of the twenty-seventh session of the Commission

Rule 1, paragraph (a) of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia provides that the regular sessions of the Commission shall be held in April every two years, at a time to be determined by the members of the Commission. Subject to an invitation of a member country of the Commission to host the twenty-seventh session of ESCWA, it is expected that the Commission will decide to hold its twenty-seventh session in Beirut during the month of April 2012.

11. Other matters

This item covers any other issue which the members of the Commission may wish to discuss.

12. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its twenty-sixth session

The Commission will consider the draft report on its twenty-sixth session, with decisions presented to the Economic and Social Council for adoption, and decisions presented to the Economic and Social Council for informative purposes.
