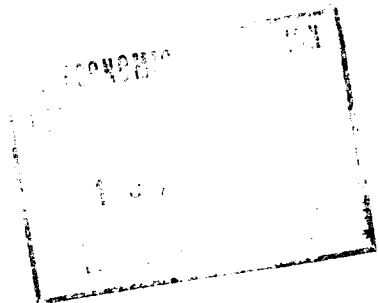




UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL  
E/ECWA/166  
6 March 1983  
ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA  
Tenth session  
7-11 May 1983  
Baghdad, Iraq  
Item 7(e) of the provisional agenda

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION

Follow-up action on the implementation of ECWA resolution 27(III)  
on the general study of the economic and social situation  
and potential of the Palestinian Arab people

Note by the Executive Secretary

1. In accordance with resolution 27(III), and in accordance with the pertinent paragraphs of resolution 33(VIII) on the economic and social situation and potential of the Palestinian people adopted by the Commission in its third and eighth sessions in 1976 and 1981 respectively, the Executive Secretary took immediate action in April 1981 by signing a contract with Team International (TEAM), an engineering and management consultant firm, to complete the project in 16 months. A report on progress made towards the implementation of this project up to March 1982 (E/ECWA/140) was submitted to the Commission in May 1982.
2. TEAM has submitted two progress reports to ECWA for review and comment since its last report. The submission of the final version of the study which was expected to be on 28 February 1983 has been delayed by six months owing to circumstances in Beirut which made it impossible for TEAM to continue research activities, particularly field work. However, consultations between ECWA and TEAM have continued in order to avoid further delays in the submission. The progress report submitted to ECWA concerns aspects of the study mentioned below.
3. The working group supervising the project was reinforced to facilitate its execution. The working group dealing with the socio-economic history of Palestine has already completed its research and is now in the process of translating it into English. The survey group which was assigned to do research on the prevailing socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people in the region of Western Asia continued its work in Kuwait, Lebanon, the Occupied Territories and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as in other Palestinian communities in the region; it covered such topics as population distribution, economic and demographic characteristics of the Palestinian people, conditions of Palestinian youth and women, social organizations and structures, education and health services, Palestinian business activities, socio-cultural relations, labour force participation and the structure and conditions of employment and migration, and the impact of Israeli occupation on Palestinian economic activities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

4. Field work was set back by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. So far as it was possible, various empirical techniques were used, such as questionnaires, structured interviews and interview guides, in order to gather data on the socio-economic situation of Palestinians. Also, use was made of official records and other source materials. The pre-testing of samples continued in several Beirut camps. Data collected were analysed in order to determine the relevance of sampling methods, the questionnaire form and its content. In this connection, at the suggestion of PLO liaison officers in Beirut and of ECWA, TEAM extended its field work to cover all Palestinian camps, meaning the inclusion of Palestinian camps and settlements in southern Lebanon, i.e. south Sidon.

5. Data analysis was impeded because over 400 interview forms from out of 1,000 interviews which had been carried out in Kuwait, were dislocated in Beirut owing to the events in Lebanon. However, work on the bibliography on Palestine, the Palestinians and the Palestinian Question proceeded in accordance with the original plan, and an extensive bibliography with selective annotations is expected to be completed shortly.

6. TEAM's study is expected to become a major source for the preparation of reports to the General Assembly and to the Western Asian Regional Preparatory Meeting for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine (Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, 25-29 April 1983). Based on the findings of the final version of the study on the socio-economic conditions and potential of the Palestinian Arab people, TEAM will prepare a synthesis of the study to be presented to the International Conference which will be held in Paris in August 1983.