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FOR WESTERN ASIA

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13-18 May 1989

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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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INTRODUCTION

1. This report covers the period since the fourteenth session. It was adopted by the Commission at its 3rd meeting, held on 18 May 1989. In addition, a report was prepared on the work of the Commission during the period between its fourteenth session and April 1988, which was duly approved.¹/

¹/ See Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Report of the Executive Secretary, April 1987 - April 1988 (E/ESCWA/88/1/Rev.1).
I. WORK OF THE COMMISSION SINCE THE FOURTEENTH SESSION

A. Activities of subsidiary bodies

2. The Standing Committee for the Programme was established as the main subsidiary organ of the Commission by virtue of Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA)\(^1\) resolution 114(IX) of 12 May 1982 on the ECWA medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989. By virtue of ECWA resolution 125(XI) of 26 April 1984 on general policy-making structure of the Commission, the Standing Committee for the Programme was designated as the Technical Committee and vested with additional terms of reference, among which were the examination of items on the agenda of the sessions of the Commission. The Technical Committee held its sixth session from 13 to 15 May 1989 at the headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Baghdad.

B. Other activities

3. The report of the Executive Secretary on progress made in the implementation of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1988-1989, including revisions and addenda,\(^2\) covers all the activities of ESCWA during the period since its last session.

C. Relations with specialized agencies and other organizations

4. The ESCWA secretariat continued to strengthen its relations with the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system. Joint activities have been undertaken with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Furthermore, contacts have been made for the purpose of strengthening co-ordination with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNESCO and the United Nations Department of International Economic and Social Affairs. These activities are described in the report of the Executive Secretary referred to in section B above.

\(^1\) The Economic Commission for Western Asia was redesignated the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia by Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/69 of 26 July 1985.

5. Since the fourteenth session of the Commission, numerous contacts have been made with national and regional entities outside the United Nations system for the purposes of co-operation and co-ordination. Regarding the former, a protocol of co-operation\(^1\) was signed by ESCWA and the Royal Scientific Society in Amman, Jordan on 10 May 1987. The latter includes the agreement reached with the secretariat of the League of Arab States to publish jointly a Unified Arab Statistical Abstract, first issued in March 1988, which replaced the Statistical Indicators of the Arab World. An agreement with the League of Arab States for co-operation in the transport sector was also signed in June 1988 in Tunis. Co-operation was also the subject of high-level discussions with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND), the Arab Industrial Development Organization (AIDO), the Arab Labour Organization (ALO), the Islamic Development Bank and the Arab Monetary Fund. Attention is also drawn to the Seminar on Privatization and Structural Adjustment in the Arab Countries, jointly sponsored by the Arab Monetary Fund, UNDP, ESCWA and the International Monetary Fund, which was held in December 1988 in Abu Dhabi. Reference is made to the joint studies undertaken with ALO and AIDO. Details thereon can be found in the report referred to in section B above.

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\(^1\) In Arabic only.
II. FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

A. Attendance and organization of work

6. The fifteenth session of the Commission was held at ministerial level at its headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq, on 17 and 18 May 1989. Its deliberations covered three meetings.

7. The session was attended by representatives of the following members of the Commission:1/ Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

8. By virtue of rule 63 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Commission, the following States Members of the United Nations or of the specialized agencies not members of the Commission participated as observers in the work of the session: Algeria, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Hungary, Japan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Turkey and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

9. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies attended the session as observers: FAO, ILO, International Telecommunication Union, UNCTC, UNDP, UNEP (Bahrain), UNFPA, World Food Programme and WHO.

10. Representatives of the following governmental and non-governmental regional organizations also attended the session as observers: Arab Atomic Energy Agency, Arab Co-operative Federation, Arab Federation for Food Industries, Arab Federation of Shipping, AIDO, Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, ALO, Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization: Arab Literacy and Adult Education Organization, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, Arab Planning Institute, Federation of Arab Economists, Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils, General Federation of Arab Women, Gulf Co-operation Council, and Union of Arab Historians.

11. Representatives of the Iraqi Fund for External Development and the Saudi Fund for Development also attended the session as observers.

12. Representatives of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the European Economic Community also attended the session as observers.

13. A representative of the International Council for Building Research Studies and Documentation also attended the session as an observer.

1. Election of officers

14. At its 1st meeting held on 17 May 1989, the Commission unanimously elected the following: His Excellency Hikmat Omar Mukhailif al-Hadithi, head of the

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1/ For the names of participants in the session, see document E/ESCA/15/INF.3/Rev.1.
delegation of Iraq, as Chairman of the fifteenth session; His Excellency Motahar Abdalla al-Saidi, head of the delegation of Yemen, and Sheikh Khalifa Jassim Al Thani, head of the delegation of Qatar, as Vice-Chairmen and Mr. Mokhtar Hashim Osman, member of the delegation of Egypt, as Rapporteur.

2. Credentials

15. In accordance with rule 11 of the rules of procedure of the Commission, the officers of the session examined the credentials of delegations and found them to be in order.

3. Organization of work

16. At its 1st meeting, the Commission adopted the proposals for the organization of its work contained in document E/ESCWA/15/2.

B. Agenda

17. At its 1st meeting, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda contained in document E/ESCWA/15/L.1.1/

1. Opening of the session.

2. Election of officers.

3. Adoption of the agenda.

4. Organization of work.

5. Invitation to States Members of the United Nations or of the specialized agencies not members of the Commission to participate in a consultative capacity in the fifteenth session of the Commission.

6. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission.

7. Adoption of the report of the Technical Committee on its sixth session.


9. Current issues of importance to the ESCWA region (Commission resolution 119(X)): Privatization.

10. Other matters.

11. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its fifteenth session.

C. Account of proceedings

18. The session was opened by His Excellency Mr. Taha Yassin Ramadhan, Member of the Revolution Command Council and First Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, who

1/ The agenda as adopted was issued in document E/ESCWA/15/1.
welcomed the participants and expressed his satisfaction that the session was being held against the background of a positive Arab climate. He commended the role played by the Commission in assisting development efforts in member countries and in other Arab countries and hoped that its work would have positive results for those countries.

19. He noted that the session coincided with the end of the Third United Nations Development Decade, which had not accomplished much for the developing countries. Contradictions in the world economy, imbalances in the economic environment and other factors had helped to aggravate the world economic crisis. He pointed to factors that had harmed the interests of the international community and those of the developing countries, citing the lack of co-ordination of economic policies with the advanced countries, the failure to observe the principle of interconnection in the world economy, the continuing financial and monetary crisis faced by the developing countries and the continuing unfavourable international terms of trade.

20. He expressed his concern about the deterioration in world economic conditions, noting some of the causes. The debt crisis was world-wide and constituted an obstacle to economic recovery and development.

21. He stressed the need for serious discussion between the developing countries and the advanced countries, with a view to reforming the international monetary, financial and commercial systems. He also stressed the need to strengthen South-South co-operation and increase self-reliance in order to reorganize the structure of the world economy.

22. He drew attention to the necessity of taking into account the principle of Arab economic interconnection and the common interest of the Arab nation in order to meet the challenges faced by the Arab economy. As an example he cited the establishment of the Arab Co-operation Council as a practical step towards putting Arab economic relations on a sound footing. Arab economic efforts should be redoubled in order to consolidate the Arab position in the age of economic blocs.

23. He said that progress in development had not stopped even during the war and he praised the strength of the Iraqi economy.

24. He commended Iraq's peaceful stance and its endeavour to provide a positive climate for a lasting and comprehensive peace with Iran, according to Security Council resolution 598 (1987) of 20 July 1987.

25. He noted the case of Lebanon and the destruction inflicted on its economic institutions and the human losses incurred. He said that Iraq's victory, the establishment of the Arab Co-operation Council, the Union of the Arab Maghreb, the establishment of the State of Palestine and the continuing revolution of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories were all encouraging signs.

26. He called for exceptional attention and special support to be devoted to the Palestinian State and for priority to be granted to the Palestinian people in the programmes of the session in order to give them support and strengthen their determination with a view to securing Palestinian participation in the construction of the great Arab homeland.
27. In conclusion, he expressed his confidence that the Commission would fulfill its responsibilities and redouble its efforts to promote Arab economic and social development, thereby achieving its noble goals.

28. Mr. Hisham Hassan Tawfiq, Chairman of the Commission's fourteenth session, made a statement in which he reaffirmed the interest of Iraq in the Commission, the work that it undertook and the role it played in the service of the member countries, as well as the importance of collective work to develop the countries of the region.

29. He expressed his hope that the work in progress would lead to the achievement of the desired goals. In this connection, he referred to the complexity of economic conditions, as reflected in the low prices of basic commodities and low oil prices, which were the source of foreign currency for the countries of the region. Other factors were the high prices of processed goods needed by these countries.

30. He said that it was necessary to arrive at a new economic system based on the free will of countries; such a system could only be achieved through integration and co-operation between those countries. In the light of the peace that was currently emerging in the region and its positive influence on economic conditions, he stated that it was necessary to strive to make it permanent through the full application of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

31. He invited the international community to contribute to a conclusive peace, since peace was the basis for development, which could not be achieved under conditions of war and conflict.

32. He spoke of the recent establishment of the Arab Co-operation Council and the role it could play in strengthening economic capabilities at a semi-regional level.

33. He drew attention to the establishment of the State of Palestine, which had crowned years of struggle by the Palestinian Arab people and its determination and intrepidity. He stressed the need to bear this fact in mind and to take the Palestinian Arab people into consideration in all future plans.

34. A message from the Secretary-General was read out. In his message, the Secretary-General said that the growth of the developing countries, which faced an inhospitable international economic environment, was relatively slow. In Western Asia, some countries had had to undergo serious adjustment. He said that regional co-operation was critical and welcomed the establishment of the Arab Co-operation Council.

35. He added that satisfactory progress was being made with regard to environmental issues: there was a global awareness of the potentially disastrous course upon which the world was engaged unless present trends were checked. In Western Asia, environmental concerns were likely to grow in importance.

36. On the eve of the 1990s, he stated that new initiatives were needed in order to revitalize economic growth. The Commission's contributions to the special session of the General Assembly on international economic co-operation and the international development strategy would be most valuable.
37. Turning to political developments in the region, he said that, following the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq and the deployment of the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIHOG), the talks between the two parties were continuing under his auspices with a view to achieving the full implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

38. The Secretary-General said that he was frustrated by the lack of progress in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that he intended to continue his efforts to promote negotiations based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, taking account of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination.

39. He stated that the situation in Lebanon was also a cause for grave concern. He was doing all he could to support the efforts of the Arab League Ministerial Committee.

40. He expressed the hope that the spirit of co-operation would prevail throughout the region, and wished the Commission every success.

41. The Executive Secretary made a statement in which he expressed his deep gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Taha Yassin Ramadhan, Member of the Revolution Command Council and First Deputy Prime Minister, for his gracious patronage of the inaugural meeting of the Commission's fifteenth session. He presented through him his sincere thanks and appreciation to His Excellency President Saddam Hussein and to the people and Government of Iraq for the facilities they had provided for the work of the Commission.

42. He expressed his thanks to His Excellency Mr. Hisham Hassan Tawfiq, Chairman of the fourteenth session of the Commission, for the co-operation and support he and his colleagues had extended to the Commission in its work.

43. He welcomed the esteemed heads and members of the delegations of member countries and the observers from other countries and from Arab and international organizations who showed great interest in the work of the Commission.

44. He expressed his determination to reinvigorate the Commission and to make it a beneficial instrument in order to strengthen regional co-operation and to promote economic and social development in the region.

45. He noted that the Commission, despite its relatively recent establishment, had already made numerous outstanding contributions to development in the region.

46. He stated that, with the approach of the 1990s, a number of political developments had come to the fore which justified a certain optimism. That optimism was based on the palpable signs of international détente and the increasingly important role of the United Nations in mediation to solve regional conflicts, which gave renewed hope of achieving better international relations and of giving members of the international family, especially the developing countries, fair opportunities of achieving progress, prosperity and security for man, who was both the aim and the instrument of all development.

47. He expressed his optimism about the cessation of fighting between Iraq and Iran and his firm faith in the ability of Iraq to pursue independent development and to play a positive and effective role in the march of civilization in the region.
48. He commended the memorable role of the United Nations in settling regional conflicts and its undertaking of noble, humanitarian tasks, as was evidenced by its supervision of the steps being taken to free Namibia from the clutches of South Africa in order to help its people to achieve complete independence, by the renewed hope of achieving stability and comprehension in Afghanistan and Cambodia, and by the granting of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces, whose activities were in evidence in the region.

49. He saluted the struggle of the fearless people of Palestine and their courageous intifadah and he congratulated the delegation of the State of Palestine on its attendance of a session of the Commission for the first time in that capacity.

50. He expressed his grief for wounded Lebanon, whose people had faced 14 years of dangers and threats that had taken their toll on the infrastructure of that country.

51. He stressed the importance of achieving a just and lasting peace in the region and allowing the region's efforts and resources to be devoted to reconstruction and development.

52. He spoke at length on economic conditions in the advanced countries and the developing countries and on the recession and aggravation of economic problems suffered by the latter, as could be seen in the decline in their ability to achieve their objectives, the frustration of their efforts to develop productive capacity, the deficiencies in their balance of payments and budgets and the effects of inflation and unemployment. He reviewed the policies and measures adopted by countries of the region to counter economic imbalances, especially the rationalization of current expenditure and investment, the curtailing of imports and the encouragement of the private sector to fulfil its responsibilities.

53. He stated that the secretariat would attach increasing importance to co-operation with member States, especially with respect to care for the disabled, the development of manpower resources, increased employment opportunities, the greater participation of women in development and programmes of social and occupational welfare. The secretariat was also intent on enhancing regional co-operation, especially within the framework of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1990-1991 and the draft medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997.

54. He said that the secretariat was reconsidering its priorities and methods of work and the means whereby it co-operated with member States, Arab and international organizations and other countries and bodies. It was increasing its own efficiency and effectiveness, reducing the average vacancy rate, instituting a staff training programme and installing modern office equipment. The secretariat was also seeking to promote intellectual and scientific interaction among the various specializations and to implement regional and national projects in collaboration with various Arab and international organizations and bodies. He expressed his appreciation of their co-operation with and interest in the Commission.
1. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission
   (Agenda item 6)
   (E/ESWCA/15/4)

55. Under this item, the Executive Secretary indicated that the Technical Committee had discussed at its sixth session the reports and note of the Executive Secretary. The most important of these were the above-mentioned report on the progress made in the implementation of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1988-1989 (see chap. I, sect. B); the report on follow-up action on the resolutions of the Commission at its fourteenth session (E/ESWCA/C.1/15/6 and Add.1-3 and Add.4 and Corr.1 (Arabic only)); and the note by the Executive Secretary on follow-up action at the regional level on United Nations world conferences and ESCWA regional meetings (E/ESWCA/C.1/15/7). In addition, the draft programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1990-1991 (E/ESWCA/C.1/15/9) and the draft medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (E/ESWCA/C.1/15/10(Part I) and Supplements 1-3 and E/ESWCA/C.1/15/10(Part II)) were discussed. It was proposed to discuss these activities under item 7 of the agenda.

2. Adoption of the report of the Technical Committee at its sixth session
   (Agenda item 7)
   (E/ESWCA/C.1/15/15 and E/ESWCA/15/5)

56. The Rapporteur of the Technical Committee examined the draft report of the Technical Committee at its sixth session and reviewed the activities of the Commission contained in the report, the remarks of members and the most important conclusions. The report was discussed and adopted with the exception of the draft resolutions; it was agreed to examine them in the final meeting of the fifteenth session of the Commission.

3. Financial status of the Commission's programmes
   (Agenda item 8)
   (E/ESWCA/15/6 and Add.1-2)

57. A representative of the secretariat reviewed the main points contained in the above-mentioned documents.

58. The Executive Secretary reviewed the most important indicators of the financial situation of the Commission's programmes and drew attention to the main modes of expenditure. He said that staff members' expenses accounted for the major portion of expenditure, followed by their overheads and travel expenses when serving member countries.

59. In his reply concerning the relation between the expenditure indicators set forth in the documents under review and performance levels, he explained that these indicators were not so much connected with performance levels as with vacancy rates. Whenever the vacancy rate fell, expenditure rose.

60. He said that the United Nations provided up to 90 per cent of ESCWA funds; the remainder came from other United Nations organizations, regional funds and certain countries.
61. In the light of the current financial crisis, the United Nations was aiming to reduce its budget and this would require support for the activities of the Commission in order to enable it to engage in these activities in the desired manner.

62. The Executive Secretary also touched on the volume of voluntary contributions of member countries to the Commission's programmes and projects. The contributions had been discontinued since 1983 and only a small amount was left; that money would soon be exhausted if additional contributions were not received from member countries.

63. One of the representatives noted that in other regional commissions the volume of members' contributions was large compared with the contributions of ESCWA member countries to ESCWA. He requested the Executive Secretary to undertake visits to member countries in order to continue the efforts exerted by the former Executive Secretary to obtain financing from these countries for the implementation of new projects which would serve the region.

64. Another representative praised this proposal and suggested that the project proposals should be integrated and finalized in order to facilitate financing by Arab funds.

4. Current issues of importance to the ESCWA region
   (Commission resolution 119(X)):
   Privatization
   (Agenda item 9)
   (E/ESWA/15/7)

65. The Officer-in-Charge of the Development Planning Division reviewed the summary and conclusions contained in document E/ESWA/15/7 on the subject of privatization.

66. A representative commented that the subject was one of the most important currently under consideration in the region. The countries that had embarked upon the experiment of national liberation had tended since the 1950s to favour the public sector over the private sector, the public sector had played an important role which was reflected in a number of social and political issues.

67. Another representative pointed to the need for certain conditions when transferring projects to the private sector, such as general financial policies and controls on projects undertaken by the private sector.

68. Another representative warned against being over-hasty in privatizing certain activities because of a failure of the public sector to manage them properly, since that could be due to the external influence of the financial market and not necessarily bad management.

69. A representative reviewed the experience of his country and said that the privatization of certain enterprises had produced a profit, which confirmed the importance of private initiatives and good management.

70. A representative commented that the success of an enterprise should not be measured only in terms of profits. The private sector was able to make a profit because it was free to increase prices, regardless of the implications for the public. The criterion for success should be the ability of the private enterprise to penetrate world markets and to obtain hard currency.
71. Another representative reviewed the experience of Iraq in this field. He stressed that the policy of privatization was not as a result of the failure of the public sector and that the concentration of enterprises in the public sector had not come about because the State had actively sought that, but because the potential of the private sector had been limited in the early 1970s.

72. He added that when it had been decided to follow this policy, the State had begun with the agricultural sector because its absorptive capacity had made it ready for this change. He stressed that the aim was not so much to achieve a financial yield as to mobilize the rest of the economic sector with greater efficiency and to put an end to disguised unemployment.

73. A number of representatives said that the document under discussion focussed on theory and had not reviewed any practical experiments which would enrich the region in that field.

74. One of the representatives suggested that the document should be used as a starting point to elaborate the ideas contained in it, and that ESCWA and Arab research centres should be asked to carry out a study on the experience of developing countries in this field, which could provide economic indicators for the region.

75. Another representative suggested that ESCWA should undertake a concise comparative study of the subject to be submitted to the Commission at its sixteenth session for the purpose of briefing member countries in view of the strategic importance of the subject.

76. One representative felt that the matter should be left to individual States, adding that the role of the secretariat lay in satisfying the needs of member countries if they envisaged establishing enterprises to be taken over by the private sector.

77. The Executive Secretary welcomed this suggestion and said that ESCWA was prepared to undertake studies if member countries so desired.

78. One of the representatives said that ESCWA should consult the country in question before undertaking such a study on that country.

79. A number of representatives discussed the title of the document [literally in Arabic, "the transfer of ownership of public enterprises to the private sector"]). One representative felt that it did not convey the desired meaning since it tended to minimize the importance of the public sector; he added that both sectors were necessary. He proposed that the title should be amended to "The role of the private sector", as the current title suggested a trend towards transferring everything owned by the public sector to the private sector.

80. Another representative also had reservations about the title of the document. He said that it suggested the adoption of the principle of transferring ownership of public enterprises to the private sector, adding that his country had not authorized him to adopt such a principle since that came within the scope of internal policies. He suggested changing the title of the document. He added that in its five-year plan his country had allocated 40 per cent to the private sector, which indicated the interest of his Government in that sector.
81. He asked the Executive Secretary whether the document in question was a study or a note by the Executive Secretary.

82. The Executive Secretary explained that the study formed part of a series of studies on current issues of importance to the ESCWA region being undertaken by ESCWA in compliance with its resolution 119(X) of 11 May 1983 on the policy-making structure of the Commission.

83. He added that when it had been discussed in the secretariat, the subject of privatization had revealed three main schools of thought: some felt that it was an ideological matter that provoked discord, whereas others felt it was necessary to deal with specific cases in order to get the paper away from its theoretical sphere, and yet others thought it was best to avoid the subject altogether.

84. At the end of the discussion the Chairman of the session stated that while opinion had not yet settled on a precise translation of the term "privatization" into Arabic, the current translation for the title of the document seemed to be the most appropriate.

5. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its fifteenth session
(Agenda item 11)
(E/ESCWA/15/L.8)

85. At its 3rd meeting meeting, held on 18 May 1989, the Commission adopted its report to the Economic and Social Council and authorized the Rapporteur to finalize it as appropriate.

6. Statements of observers

86. Statements were made by the representatives of the following States and organizations: France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Poland, Sweden, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; and Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.
III. RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT ITS FIFTEENTH SESSION

164(XV). Progress made in the implementation of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1988-1989

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Taking note of the modifications to the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1988-1989 as proposed in the report of the Executive Secretary,1/

Taking into consideration Commission resolution 156(XIV) of 5 April 1987 on the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1988-1989,

Noting the impact of the relatively high rate of vacancies in the technical programmes and the financial crisis in the United Nations system on the performance of these programmes,

1. Notes with appreciation the progress made in the implementation of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1988-1989,

2. Adopts, on the basis of the recommendations of the Technical Committee, the proposed modifications to the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1988-1989 as contained in the report of the Executive Secretary.

3rd plenary meeting
18 May 1989

165(XV). Environment and development in the ESCWA region

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 42/186 of 11 December 1987 on the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond, which took into consideration the concepts, ideas and recommendations contained in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 42/187 of 11 December 1987 on the above-mentioned report, by which the Assembly decided to transmit to all Governments and to the governing bodies of the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, whose main goal is to ensure that economic and social development be environmentally sound and sustainable, and that it meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

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Noting with appreciation the emphasis given by both the report of the World Commission and the Environmental Perspective to the convergence of interests between developed and developing countries on environmental concerns and to the necessity of multilateral co-operation,

Expressing its satisfaction at the results achieved at the First Arab Ministerial Conference on Environmental Considerations in Development, held at Tunis from 13 to 15 October 1986,

Recognizing the need for increased regional and international co-operation in addressing environmental problems which are of a global or regional character or which have a joint impact on neighbouring member countries,

Noting also with appreciation the Joint Summary of the Oslo Conference on Sustainable Development issued on 10 July 1988, particularly in view of the role assigned to the regional commissions in the context of follow-up actions on the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development,

1. Calls upon member States to devote more attention to environmental considerations in both their overall and sectoral policies, plans and programmes with a view to contributing to environmentally sound and sustainable development;

2. Requests the Executive Secretary to take all environmental considerations into account in the implementation of the Commission's work programme, especially in the areas of agriculture, industry, transport, natural resources, energy, social development and human settlements;

3. Also requests the Executive Secretary to undertake preparations at the regional level with a view to drawing up a report on the position of the Commission to be submitted to the United Nations conference on environment and development to be held not later than 1992;

4. Further requests the Executive Secretary to explore with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme the possibility of a renewal by the Programme of its institutional support to the Commission in order to strengthen the Commission's efforts to address the priority environmental concerns in the region;

5. Recommends that the member countries should become parties to regional and global conventions dealing with environmental issues, such as the Global Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer;

6. Calls upon the member countries to participate actively in the above-mentioned United Nations conference on environment and development;
7. Appeals to funding institutions and regional and international agencies and programmes concerned with the environment, and to those countries in a position to do so, to provide financial support in order to enable the secretariat to implement regional and subregional environmental projects and to render assistance to member countries in identifying, analysing, monitoring, preventing and overcoming environmental problems.

3rd plenary meeting
18 May 1989

166(XV). Financial assistance to existing industries

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

Having noted from the many studies undertaken in past years and from national and regional meetings that a large proportion of existing industries, including small industries, are suffering from numerous problems that can be ascribed to various causes,

Noting that the adoption and implementation of sound solutions to the various problems faced by industrial enterprises in many sectors require expertise that cannot be fully provided by the staff of these enterprises,

Recalling an informal working paper prepared by the secretariat which sets forth the objectives, methodology and elements of a detailed plan of assistance to the industries in question,

1. Recommends the continuation of work on a support programme for existing industries in the member countries and of efforts to arrange for the necessary financing of the programme by member countries and by Arab funds and financial institutions in the region;

2. Requests the Executive Secretary to contact the institutions in question and to follow up the implementation of the present resolution and submit a report on this issue to the Commission at its sixteenth session.

3rd plenary meeting
18 May 1989
167(XV). **Promotion of regional co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Taking note of the report of the Executive Secretary on the progress made in the promotion of regional co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the ESCWA region, \(^1\)

Recalling its resolution 147(XIII) of 24 April 1986 on the United Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, which calls for regional co-operation in this field and stresses the need for additional extrabudgetary resources and for the formulation and implementation of nuclear projects to contribute to economic and social development in the member countries,

Being convinced that the most important effective steps in promoting regional co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy would be to begin the implementation of projects at the regional level with the financial participation of the regional funds and the institutions in question, including Arab and international institutions,

1. **Expresses its appreciation** to the Executive Secretary for the steps which he has taken to implement resolution 147(XIII);

2. **Requests** the Executive Secretary to pursue his contacts with the relevant regional and international organizations with a view to promoting co-operation in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy;

3. **Requests** the Executive Secretary to submit to the Commission at its sixteenth session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

**3rd plenary meeting**

**18 May 1989**

168(XV). **Suitable projects for regional and subregional co-operation in the ESCWA region on new and renewable sources of energy**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling the Nairobi Programme of Action for the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy, \(^2\)

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1/ E/ESCWA/C.1/15/4/Add.7.

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 43/192 of 20 December 1988, which took note of the report of the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy on its fourth session,¹/

Noting the conclusions and recommendations of the Intergovernmental Technical Meeting on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and its approval of the projects proposed by the secretariat with a view to strengthening regional co-operation in the dissemination of technologies for new and renewable sources of energy in the member countries of the Commission,²/

1. Commends the efforts of the secretariat in formulating projects in the field of new and renewable sources of energy and promoting their dissemination in the region,³/ and in establishing the Regional Centre for the New and Renewable Sources of Energy Information Network;

2. Invites regional and international funding agencies and Governments of countries able to do so, to support the efforts of the Executive Secretary to procure the funds needed to implement the co-operation projects prepared by the secretariat in the field of new and renewable sources of energy;

3. Also invites member countries which have not yet participated⁴/ in the New and Renewable Sources of Energy Information Network to contact the Regional Centre in order to exchange information on the current state of new and renewable sources of energy;

4. Calls upon the Executive Secretary to prepare a report on the steps taken to implement the present resolution for consideration by the Commission at its sixteenth session.

3rd plenary meeting
18 May 1989


³/ See E/ESCWA/C.1/15/4/Add.4.

⁴/ The following countries have participated in the projects so far: Iraq, Jordan and Egypt.
169(XV). Support for the Regional Household Survey Project in the ESCWA countries

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Taking note of the report of the Executive Secretary on the progress made in the field of technical co-operation1/ and in particular in the field of strengthening national household survey capabilities,

Recalling the reports of the Second Meeting of Heads of Central Statistical Organizations, held on 25 and 26 March 1987, and of the Tripartite Review Meeting on the Regional Household Survey Project2/ and the recommendations of both meetings concerning the importance of consultancy services in the field of household surveys,

Recalling also the report of the Third Meeting of Heads of Central Statistical Organizations, held from 28 February to 2 March 1989, and its expression of appreciation of the consultancy services provided by the secretariat in the field of household surveys, its reaffirmation of the continued need of most member countries for more technical services in order to implement household surveys and to strengthen national capabilities in this field, and also the recommendation of the Meeting concerning the need to continue the activities of the Regional Household Survey Project and to strive to transform it into a permanent work programme of the Statistics Division,

Recalling also the financial support provided by the United Nations Development Programme from 1981 to 1987 in order to strengthen national household survey capabilities, and the statement made at the 3rd plenary meeting of the present session of the Commission by the Regional Director of the United Nations Development Programme,

Noting that member States are preparing national household survey programmes and projects to be implemented on a continuous basis and that the execution of such national programmes and projects relies to a large extent on technical services provided by the secretariat in this field,

1. Stresses the continuing importance of the technical services of the Commission in the field of household surveys and the need to develop these services in order to meet the needs of member States and to keep abreast of world developments in the field of information technology;

2. Invites the Executive Secretary to exert efforts to ensure the necessary funds to guarantee the continuation of the Regional Household Survey Project and to strive to transform it into a regular work programme of the Statistics Division;

3. Invites the Executive Secretary to request the International Labour Organisation to contribute the services of an adviser in the field of labour statistics;

1/ E/ESCOMA/C.1/15/4(Part II).

2/ RAB/80/009.
4. Requests the secretariat to recontact the United Nations Development Programme for support of the Regional Household Survey Project, provided that member States support this request through their permanent representatives and include it in their country programmes submitted to the United Nations Development Programme.

5. Conveys its thanks to the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations for its support of the Regional Household Survey Project and calls upon the secretariat to pursue its contacts for the purpose of signing the necessary agreement with that body.

6. Requests the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution to the Commission at its sixteenth session.

3rd plenary meeting
18 May 1989

170(XV). Activities of the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia (1985-1994)

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

Recalling its resolution 138(XII) of 24 April 1985 on the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific,

Taking note of the report of the Executive Secretary on activities of the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia (1985-1994),

Further noting the note by the Executive Secretary on the Intergovernmental/Inter-Agency Meeting on the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia, held from 13 to 15 December 1988, particularly as it relates to the follow-up of the implementation of the action programme and projects for the Decade in the ESCWA region,

Reaffirming the importance of developing activities of the transport and communications sector at the national, regional and interregional levels,

1. Invites the Executive Secretary to give the requisite priority to the activities of the Decade, in implementation of the recommendations of the Intergovernmental/Inter-Agency Meeting on the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia;


2/ See E/ESCWA/C.1/15/7, sect. (b).
2. **Invites** member States to promote the activities of the Decade and to contribute to the implementation of the action programme and projects for achieving the objectives of the Decade in Western Asia, as recommended by the Intergovernmental/Inter-Agency Meeting;

3. **Requests** the Executive Secretary to seek from international, regional and national funding institutions as well as from international and regional organizations, financial and technical support for the implementation of the projects for the Decade, particularly in the field of training in the transport sector, and for the improvement of regional and interregional transport and communications links;

4. **Requests** the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution to the Commission at its sixteenth session.

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**3rd plenary meeting**  
18 May 1989

171(XV). *Review of recurrent publications*

*The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.*

Recalling General Assembly resolution 38/32 of 25 November 1983 on the pattern of conferences, with particular reference to section E, entitled "Control and limitation of documentation",

Noting with appreciation the report of the Executive Secretary containing a review of recurrent publications of the secretariat of the Commission,¹/

Emphasizing that the recurrent publications of the secretariat of the Commission are a fundamental part of its programme of work,

Taking note of the recommendation of the Technical Committee on this subject,

Endorses the issuance of the recurrent publications by the secretariat in accordance with the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1990-1991.

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¹/ E/ESCWA/C.1/15/5.
172(XV). Economic and social conditions of the Palestinian Arab people

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling its resolution 160(XIV) of 5 April 1987 on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people,

Deeply concerned at the harsh measures, increasing restrictions, persecution, arbitrariness, expulsions, deportations, arrests and destruction perpetrated in the occupied Palestinian territories by the Israeli occupation authorities and at their attempt to repress the fearless Palestinian intifadah, all of which has led and continues to lead to the breakdown of economic life and tremendous loss of lives and damage to property with its consequent adverse impact on all aspects of development in those territories, especially in agriculture, industry and the environment,

1. Resolves to continue to follow up the action taken on all resolutions adopted by the Commission at its previous sessions and to help to find solutions for existing problems by completing the studies that have been started, bearing in mind the urgent requirements of the Palestinian Arab people with regard to reconstruction;

2. Calls upon Arab funding agencies and the Governments of countries in a position to do so to support the efforts of the Executive Secretary to provide extrabudgetary funds to enable the Commission to assist the Palestinian Arab people;

3. Requests the Executive Secretary to submit a report to the Commission at its sixteenth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

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The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, and particularly the provisions thereof that relate to the role of the regional commissions in developing co-ordination at the regional level and to the functions and responsibilities of the commissions in the programme planning and review process,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 36/228 of 18 December 1981 on programme planning, particularly section A thereof,
Recalling further General Assembly resolution 37/234 of 21 December 1982, particularly section II thereof, resolution 42/215 of 21 December 1987 and resolution 43/219 of 21 December 1988, on programme planning, in which the Assembly stressed the role of an integrated programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation system in improving the efficiency of the United Nations,

Having considered the draft medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997: regional co-operation for development in Western Asia,1/ as well as the introductory note by the Executive Secretary2/ and paragraph 87 of the report of the Technical Committee3/ on the need to pay more attention to the two least developed countries,

Taking account of its resolution 157(XIV) of 5 April 1987 on the medium-term plan of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia for the period 1990-1995, particularly paragraph 3 thereof,

Recognizing that the draft medium-term plan will be revised in the light of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade and in the light of other regional and international developments,

1. Stresses the need to ensure that the plan fully and harmoniously reflects the development priorities and requirements of the States members of the Commission in the light of recent developments in the region and in the world;

2. Approves in principle the draft medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, bearing in mind the observations made in the meetings of the Technical Committee at its sixth session, especially those concerning the adoption of a method of follow-up based on annual reports, as well as those received from the member States by the end of June 1989 at the latest;

3. Requests the Executive Secretary to submit to the Technical Committee at its seventh session a progress report on the revision of the plan.

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1/ E/ESCWA/C.1/15/10 (Part II).
2/ E/ESCWA/C.1/15/10 (Part I) and Supplements 1-3.
3/ E/ESCWA/C.1/15/5.
174(XV). Draft programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1990-1991

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling its resolutions 114(IX) of 12 May 1982 on the ECWA medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 and 125(XI) of 26 April 1984 on the general policy-making structure of the Commission, which established the terms of reference of the Technical Committee,

Noting with appreciation the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1990-1991 proposed by the secretariat,

Taking into consideration the financial crisis of the United Nations and its impact on the programme through post reductions,

1. Adopts the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1990-1991, bearing in mind the observations of the Technical Committee at its sixth session;

2. Requests the Executive Secretary to submit a report to the Technical Committee at its seventh session on any modifications to the programme which may need to be made.

3rd plenary meeting 18 May 1989

175(XV). Strengthening of the role and performance of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Taking advantage of the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of the Commission, and being convinced of the importance of the mission it performs in the service of economic and social development in the region of Western Asia,

Taking note of the report issued in February 1989 on the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit1/ and of the views put forward in the report as to the benefits that could be derived from further development of the Commission as an effective tool for regional co-operation and economic development in the member States,

1. Decides:

(a) To invite member States to set up an advisory body comprising the heads of their diplomatic missions in Iraq to assist the Executive Secretary in the study of problems connected with the work of the Commission;

1/ E/ESCW/C.1/15/11, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session under the symbol JIU/REP/89/1.
(b) To invite member States and institutions of the region to make optimum use of the Commission as a medium for co-operation, co-ordination, operational research and project execution in the economic and social fields;

(c) To invite member States and regional funds and institutions to make the necessary financial contributions and to sponsor some of the projects which the secretariat is carrying out, so as to enable it to follow up present and future issues in member States;

(d) To invite member States to encourage competent nationals of their countries to serve in the secretariat and to second some of their civil servants for service in the secretariat, in accordance with arrangements to be agreed upon and pursuant to its resolution 161(XIV) of 5 April 1987 on human and financial resources: vacancies in the secretariat;

2. Requests the United Nations Secretariat to give effect to General Assembly resolution 39/243 of 18 December 1984 on the staff and administrative questions of the Economic Commission for Western Asia and to take into account the circumstances of the secretariat relating to staff reductions;

3. Requests the Executive Secretary to prepare, in consultation with the member States, a report containing proposals and recommendations for the strengthening of the role and performance of the Commission and to submit this report to the Commission at its sixteenth session for its consideration and for the adoption of a resolution on the subject.

3rd plenary meeting
18 May 1989

176(XV). International assistance to the flood-stricken areas of Democratic Yemen

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Noting with deep regret the extensive loss of life and property and the destruction of much of the economic and social infrastructure caused by the rains and floods in Democratic Yemen in March and April 1989,

Having taken note of the statement by the representative of Democratic Yemen concerning the magnitude of this disaster and the efforts that are being made by that Government to cope with it, and having taken note of the report of the secretariat on the subject,1/

Deeply concerned that, despite the immediate relief assistance offered so far, the magnitude of the damage caused by the rains and floods and the enormity of the reconstruction and rehabilitation requirements have confronted the Government with severe difficulties in meeting the needs of a large number of victims, in spite of the adoption of rehabilitation and reconstruction measures for the stricken areas,

1/ E/ESCAWA/C.1/15/12.
Recalling its resolution 107(IX) of 11 May 1982 on international assistance to the flood-stricken areas of the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen, which provided a framework for the offer of aid and assistance to those areas at that time,

1. Expresses its gratitude to the donor States and agencies and requests them, especially the States members of the Commission, to offer more aid and voluntary contributions with a view to alleviating the destruction occasioned by the disaster;

2. Requests the Executive Secretary to formulate a programme, in accordance with available resources, with a view to assisting in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the flood-stricken areas in Democratic Yemen, and to seek financing for this programme from the agencies concerned;

3. Requests the Executive Secretary to devise a system in the secretariat to deal with natural disasters with a view to expediting the offer of immediate assistance when such disasters occur;

4. Also requests the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution to the Commission at its sixteenth session.

3rd plenary meeting
18 May 1989

177(XV). International development strategy for the
fourth United Nations development decade

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Being aware of the crucial importance of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade, and of the contribution of the member countries thereto, in setting forth the trends and conditions for development during the 1990s,

Expressing its appreciation for the efforts of the secretariat in the preparation of the forthcoming strategy,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 43/182 of 20 December 1988 on preparations for an international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade,

1. Decides to set up a committee of government development experts from member countries and to invite it to collaborate with the secretariat in the preparation of a report reflecting the priorities and objectives which the member countries aspire to achieve within the framework of the fourth United Nations development decade;

2. Invites the Executive Secretary to make the necessary arrangements to convene meetings of the committee of government experts at an appropriate time during 1989.

3rd plenary meeting
18 May 1989
### Annex I

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSION AT ITS FIFTEENTH SESSION**

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LIST OF PRINCIPAL PUBLICATIONS AND DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY THE COMMISSION SINCE ITS FOURTEENTH SESSION

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