

287 (XXV). Strengthening statistical capacities for evidence-based policymaking

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,¹ in which the General Assembly reiterates its determination to ensure the timely and full realization of the development goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including those agreed at the Millennium Summit, that are described as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

Referring to the significance of the impartiality of national statistical offices (NSOs) and of ensuring effective coordination between those offices and other State organs, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 1994,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/50 of 27 July 2005 on the Damascus Declaration, and the role of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including MDGs,

Also recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/13 of 22 July 2005 on the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme, which stressed the increasing importance of population and housing censuses in meeting data requirements for follow-up on activities related to the Millennium Summit,

Reaffirming the need to improve institutional statistical frameworks in member countries and intensify efforts aimed at strengthening statistical capacity to produce and disseminate timely and reliable indicators on progress towards national and international development goals, including MDGs, as emphasized by the Commission in resolution 276 (XXIV) of 11 May 2006 on the strengthening of statistical capacity in the ESCWA region,

Reaffirming also the crucial role of the ESCWA secretariat in facilitating the sharing of knowledge between member countries and supporting those countries in strengthening their national statistical capacities for evidence-based policymaking by means of technical cooperation and capacity-building activities aimed at improving the comprehensiveness, quality and comparability of economic and social statistics,

Reaffirming further the need for the secretariat to continue its efforts to mobilize the necessary additional resources in support of member country efforts in that respect,

Having reviewed the report of the ESCWA Statistical Committee on its seventh session, which was held in Beirut from 7 to 9 November 2006,²

Welcoming the recommendation of the Statistical Committee on the setting up of a task force of statisticians that includes NSO directors,

1. *Approves* the recommendation of the Statistical Committee that ESCWA region NSO capacity-building needs should be periodically assessed in order to monitor progress;

¹ General Assembly resolution 60/1.

² E/ESCWA/SCU/2006/IG.1/12.

2. *Encourages* member countries to produce MDG indicators and, in particular, indicators related to poverty, education and health, using surveys and other relevant sources;

3. *Also encourages* member countries to adopt the Common Set of Core Information and Communications Technology Indicators issued by the Global Partnership on Measuring Information and Communications Technology for Development, and make available the data related to those indicators for use in the drafting, evaluation and review of strategic policies and work plans in areas of priority for the development of an information society in the region;

4. *Stresses* the need to strengthen NSO impartiality in order to produce objective data, and improve coordination mechanisms within the statistical system with a view to improving the production and use of statistical data for evidence-based policymaking;

5. *Encourages* member countries to exchange experience and information for best practice in the development of statistical activities and systems;

6. *Commends* the support given by Oman to the Task Force on Population and Housing Censuses and the activities that it has undertaken for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses;

7. *Calls upon* member countries to accelerate implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts and its revisions, in order to enable policymakers to monitor economic changes and improve economic performance;

8. *Requests* the secretariat to:

(a) Assist member countries in building their capacity to unify concepts and definitions and carry out multi-purpose family surveys and improve their administrative records at the national level through holding workshops and providing technical services;

(b) Prepare and submit to the ESCWA Statistical Committee periodic reports on progress made in the development of NSO statistical activities, based on ESCWA region NSO capacity-building needs assessments;

(c) Facilitate, through its official webpage on the Internet and the provision of technical consultancy, the interchange between member countries of experience and knowledge, with a view to promoting best practices in the development of statistical systems and activities;

(d) Increase its efforts to mobilize extrabudgetary resources to support various activities, including those of the Task Force on Population and Housing Censuses, and implement the 2010 Population and Housing Census Programme.

10th plenary meeting
29 May 2008