

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION  
FOR WESTERN ASIA**

**REPORT OF THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION  
13-15 December 2016**

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL  
OFFICIAL RECORDS: 2016**

**SUPPLEMENT No. 21**



United Nations

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## Summary

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), pursuant to its resolutions 158 (XIV) of 5 April 1987 on holding the sessions of the Commission on a biennial basis, and 196 (XVII) of 31 May 1994 on the frequency of sessions of the Commission, held its twenty-ninth session in Doha, from 13 to 15 December 2016.

Session meetings were held in two segments, one for senior officials and the other for ministers. At the senior officials segment, consideration was given to requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of ESCWA to participate as observers in the twenty-ninth session of the Commission. The segment also considered substantive issues related to priority areas for the region and procedural matters regarding programmes of work and progress in their implementation.

The Commission reviewed the outcomes of the 2016 Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development; discussed support for the Palestinian people; considered the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019 and the report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission; and addressed management issues.

At the ministerial level, three roundtable discussions were held on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab region. The Commission chose this topic as the theme of its twenty-ninth session, which was discussed from three dimensions with reference to research papers prepared by the secretariat on the following: challenges facing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level; the impact of conflict and occupation on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; and methods and tools for supporting member States in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The session concluded with the adoption of the Doha Declaration on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and resolutions to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council for its attention and action. The present report sets out the Declaration the resolutions adopted by the Commission, and a summary of the main points raised in the discussions under each agenda item.

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its twenty-ninth session pursuant to its resolutions 158 (XIV) of 5 April 1987 on holding the sessions of the Commission on a biennial basis, and 196 (XVII) of 31 May 1994 on the frequency of sessions of the Commission.
2. The present report sets out the proceedings of the twenty-ninth session of the Commission, which consisted of eight plenary meetings: four senior officials meetings and four closed meetings, as well as three ministerial dialogues. The session was held in Doha, from 13 to 15 December 2016.

## I. ISSUES CALLING FOR ATTENTION AND ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

3. At its plenary meeting on 15 December 2016, the Commission adopted the following Declaration and resolutions to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council for its attention and action.

### **Doha Declaration on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

1. We, the representatives of the member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), assembled in Doha at the twenty-ninth session of the Commission, held from 13 to 15 December 2016, reaffirm our commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>1</sup> in line with the region's specificities and development priorities and to achieve national ownership and leadership of the development process.

2. We note that success in implementing the 2030 Agenda requires close cooperation between all stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels, and the development of international partnerships founded on respect, equality and commitment to the Agenda as a reference and guidelines. We urge the establishment of partnerships between Governments, the private sector and civil society as key partners in development, and coordination between relevant regional organizations.

3. We stress that the 2030 Agenda serves as a global framework supporting national policies, which contains common goals that are the outcome of global consensus and guiding measures to monitor national progress in achieving the Goals, targets and indicators of the Agenda.

4. We also stress that the implementation of the Agenda at the national level must respect fundamental principles, including preserving the overall character of the Agenda and avoiding fragmentation; and maintaining consistency between its elements, the interlinkages between Goals and targets, the integration of policies and implementation mechanisms, and the conformity of outcomes.

5. We recall ESCWA resolution 322 of 16 December 2015 on the ESCWA plan of action to support member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially incorporating the Agenda's Goals in national development plans.

6. We recognize that we are currently required to prepare for a strong start in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the national level, and to intensify efforts to develop institutional frameworks to lead, mobilize resources, build capacity, determine the roles of various partners and identify mechanisms to benefit more from national and international expertise, so as to ensure the success of the implementation process over the next 15 years.

7. We note with extreme concern the significant challenges facing the implementation of the Agenda in the region in view of the Israeli occupation, wars and conflicts, terrorism and foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Arab States, which have destroyed development infrastructure, restricted the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development, and created humanitarian problems gravely affecting Arab countries and neighbouring regions.

8. We emphasize that political instability in the region, conflict and the waves of refugees, resulting in demographic changes and pressure on national economies, infrastructure and services, are all serious challenges facing the implementation of the Agenda in conflict-affected countries. We highlight the effects of conflict on countries hosting refugees, and appreciate the support provided by Arab donor countries to conflict-affected countries.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015. A/RES/70/1.

9. We agree on the need to support least developed countries and to assist them in achieving a qualitative development shift, and to support war-torn and conflict-affected countries. We commend the serious efforts to end conflicts and wars in the region, given that development progress cannot be achieved while half of the region is blighted by conflict.

10. We stress the need to support the Palestinian people and institutions in their efforts to achieve justice and equality and to reclaim their rights in accordance with international law and the Arab Peace Initiative, including the right to development and the right to self-determination. We emphasize that continuing Israeli efforts to impose the concept of an ethnically and religiously pure State fuels conflict in the region, complicates the achievement of peace and sustainable development, and violates the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations, other international instruments and humanitarian values.

11. We agree to closely focus on strengthening cooperation and undertaking continued dialogue on energy, water and food security issues, given that they are vital to achieving sustainable development, especially diversifying energy sources, combatting water scarcity and desertification, managing joint water resources and water in occupied and conflict-affected areas, ensuring food provision, eliminating hunger, protecting the environment and limiting the effects of and adapting to climate change, particularly in view of the Paris Agreement on climate change. We also agree to take necessary measures to strengthen infrastructure and material and human capacity.

12. We support efforts to achieve gender equality and empower women, in line with countries' domestic systems and legislation. We will strive to strengthen the role of women in all areas, and consider this objective a regional priority. We will continue to support such efforts in line with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

13. We confirm our support for national and regional plans aimed at meeting the development needs of young people and groups that have been marginalized through force of circumstance, including children, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

14. We call for the employment of scientific and technological systems to identify methods and build national capacity to implement the 2030 Agenda, and for the development of a regional action plan for the achievement of aspects related to science, technology and innovation in the Arab region.

15. We recognize that there is no single institutional framework applicable to all countries for managing the adaptation, planning, implementation and follow-up processes. Each country must identify an institutional formula suitable to its national context, which complies with the integrated nature of the Agenda, and develop effective mechanisms for coordination and integration between relevant ministries, government institutions and national, regional and international partners, noting that the sustainable development process is managed by countries with the participation of all stakeholders.

16. We stress the importance of considering the implementation of the Agenda at the local level, taking into account disparities in development levels between areas within a country, in line with the comprehensive and inclusive nature of the Agenda.

17. We call for providing sufficient support to statistical offices in producing required data, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, and preparing appropriate indicators to measure progress in achieving the Goals and targets of the Agenda, especially since many indicators in the Agenda are not currently employed. We also call for updating statistical offices to ensure the production of necessary data, and for strengthening dialogue between policymakers and data producers and users from all reliable sources, while recognizing the significant statistical requirements necessary for monitoring progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda.



18. We support the initiatives of some Arab countries aimed at adopting national strategies for statistical development, and we invite other countries to develop such strategies given their pivotal role in implementing the 2030 Agenda in the Arab region.

19. We appreciate the ESCWA secretariat's role in supporting the statistical capacity of Arab countries, and we support efforts made through existing and new mechanisms, such as the ESCWA Statistical Committee and specialized statistical teams, to enable Arab countries to develop frameworks for monitoring and evaluating progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, in line with national circumstances and priorities.

20. We reaffirm our commitment to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development<sup>2</sup> and to continuing the full implementation of its regional and international pillars, recognizing that the financing gap for achieving sustainable development is widening in view of public debts and the estimated requirements of sustainable development.

21. We stress the need for all developing countries to fulfil their commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product to development assistance so as to ensure that the right to development becomes a reality for all countries. We emphasize the importance of raising the necessary funds, and note that the direct losses suffered by war-torn countries and the resultant rebuilding needs, and the indirect losses incurred by conflict-affected countries and the region as a whole, increase the cost of lost development opportunities and widen the sustainable development financing gap.

22. We are concerned by global trends that might result in the erosion of official development assistance as a result of including humanitarian relief, refugee expenditure and climate change adaptation under existing financing commitments, and of developing an indicator that combines official development assistance with other financing sources (public, private, national and international) to indicate the amount of funding available to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, without taking into account disparities in the frameworks, conditions and burdens of the funding mobilized from these sources. As such, we confirm that South-South cooperation in achieving development is complementary, rather than an alternative, to North-South cooperation and official development assistance.

23. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthening Arab intraregional trade in goods and services, and freeing it from all customs and non-customs regulations, in line with countries' international commitments, given that international trade is a key source of development funding and an auxiliary of inclusive sustainable growth. We stress the importance of efforts and initiatives to enhance regional integration by developing an Arab customs union and promoting a common Arab market to establish an Arab development space that employs Arab economic security in facing sustainable development financing challenges. We emphasize the importance of establishing an equitable and just trade system that achieves equality between countries and respects their independence, sovereignty and unity and avoids interfering in domestic affairs, and that gives priority to the development dimension and enables developing countries to actively participate in economic decision-making processes and standard-setting.

24. We appreciate increased financial contributions from Arab donors and greater direct Arab investment. We recognize that financing to achieve sustainable development in Arab countries requires fostering investment and development activities at the regional level. We commit to improving the investment and business climate and to ensuring financial inclusion so as to encourage greater Arab investment in the region and attract Arab migrant remittances through financial products developed by the Arab banking sector, by providing credit facilities for private funding, and by encouraging the private sector to invest in projects to support infrastructure so as to facilitate trade and lift non-tariff measures.

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations, Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, 2015. A/RES/69/313.

25. We affirm the importance of identifying a regional framework for dialogue on determining regional development priorities and methods to monitor progress, to overcome obstacles and to expedite implementation, and of regional cooperation on policy and ensuring policy compatibility with the situation in the Arab region, especially regarding common and transnational issues, given the importance of the regional dimension in the 2030 Agenda in supporting national efforts to achieve sustainable development.

26. We stress the importance of involving more Arab countries in global processes for monitoring and reviewing progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda, and of promoting the role of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development in following up on the implementation process and in exchanging expertise and best practices.

27. We appreciate the constructive role undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat in supporting the participation of Arab countries in the preparatory process for developing the 2030 Agenda, and request the secretariat to continue supporting the implementation process in line with the strategies approved by member States, which it developed for that purpose. In this context, we request the secretariat to focus on the following:

(a) Continue to produce informative material on the implementation of the Agenda at the national level, and to focus on local development requirements in rural and urban areas;

(b) Prepare a concept paper on establishing an Arab forum for financing sustainable development in the region, which complements the role of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development;

(c) Prepare working papers on the interlinkages between the Agenda's economic, social, environmental, political/institutional and cultural dimensions and its 17 goals, and on the role of the various actors in its implementation, including Governments, civil society and the private sector;

(d) Develop approaches that facilitate incorporating and adapting the Agenda and its Goals and targets nationally and regionally, including an approach to identify sets of interlinked goals drawn from national priorities, so as to ensure effectiveness and efficiency; and implement programmes to build national capacity and transfer knowledge to benefit from regional and international initiatives;

(e) Prepare training material and programmes and the necessary guides to develop national capacity and assist decision-makers and development partners in the implementation process, including parliamentarians and civil society organizations;

(f) Continue to develop analysis tools that assist in determining interlinkages between goals, in accordance with country specificities and national plans, including network analysis, modelling and forecasting; and work with member States to build capacity in this field;

(g) Build national capacity to prepare reports on progress achieved in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, and disseminate existing approaches to drafting such reports;

(h) Assist Arab countries in developing appropriate institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms between entities in national statistical offices, so as to improve efficiency in monitoring and evaluating progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets;

(i) Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the availability of good quality statistics for use in preparing indicators to measure progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in collaboration and coordination with the secretariat of the Arab Working Group on Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators and national statistical offices;

(j) Identify a narrow set of indicators, based on national and regional priorities while taking into account the capacity of Arab countries to provide the necessary indicators in line with the Fundamental

Principles of Official Statistics and international standards, so as to periodically monitor the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

28. From Doha, we reaffirm our commitment to working together in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, so as to secure the future to which our peoples aspire.

8<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting  
15 December 2016

### **323 (XXIX) Adoption of the strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,*

*Having reviewed* the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019,

*Considering* that the draft strategic framework has been amended in the light of subprogramme discussions undertaken at the sessions of the ESCWA subsidiary bodies, discussions held at the second meeting of the Executive Committee and comments from member States prior to and following the meeting, and discussions conducted at the twenty-ninth ESCWA ministerial session,

*Noting* that the draft strategic framework sets out the priorities of member States in the field of economic and social development, including the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

1. *Endorses* the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019, and notes comments by member States for inclusion in the programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019;
2. *Requests* the secretariat to propagate the strategic framework as adopted by member States.

8<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting  
15 December 2016

### **324 (XXIX) Adoption of the reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,*

*Affirming* the important role of the ESCWA subsidiary bodies in developing, coordinating and following up on the ESCWA programme of work in their respective competences, so as to secure optimum benefits for member States,

*Recognizing* the importance of implementing the recommendations of the subsidiary bodies to enable ESCWA to undertake its duties in the competences falling within the remit of its subsidiary bodies,

*Having considered* the recommendations set out in the reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions held in the period between the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth ESCWA sessions, namely the report on the tenth session of the Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development;<sup>1</sup> the report on the sixteenth session of the Committee on Transport;<sup>2</sup> and the report on the seventh session of the Committee on Women,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/IG.2/9/Report.

<sup>2</sup> E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/IG.3/6/Report.

<sup>3</sup> E/ESCWA/ECW/2015/IG.1/7/Report.

1. *Adopts* the recommendations set out in the above-mentioned reports of the subsidiary bodies, and requests the Executive Secretary to continue following up on their implementation;
2. *Invites* member States to put into place the necessary measures to ensure the implementation of the recommendations set out in those reports.

8<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting  
15 December 2016

**325 (XXIX) Adoption of the proposed amendments to the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,*

*Noting* the progress achieved in 2016 in implementing the programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017,

*Indicating* the importance of the proposed amendments to the programme of work, notably those related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, given that they grant the programme of work the necessary flexibility to keep pace with developments and emergency issues,

1. *Adopts* the proposed amendments to the programme of work for the period 2016-2016;
2. *Requests* the secretariat to follow up on the implementation of the programme of work and include therein the necessary activities to address any challenges that may emerge in the Arab region.

8<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting  
15 December 2016

**326 (XXIX) Justice for the Palestinian people: fifty years of Israeli occupation**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,*

*Referring* to General Assembly resolutions 67/19 of 29 November 2012 on the status of Palestine in the United Nations and 70/141 of 17 December 2015 on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination,

*Referring also* to Economic and Social Council resolution 2016/14 of 18 August 2016 on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan,

*Recalling* its resolutions 316 (XXVIII) of 18 September 2014, 307 (XXVII) of 10 May 2012 and 292 (XXVI) of 19 May 2010, in which it reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, supported the efforts of the Palestinian people and its institutions towards attaining those rights pursuant to United Nations resolutions, and called for intensifying efforts to raise awareness on the rights of the Palestinian people and on the violations of those rights,

*Referring* to resolutions 640, 641 and 642 adopted at the twenty-seventh session of the League of Arab States Summit, held on 25 and 26 July 2016, which welcome efforts to declare 2017 the International Year to End Israeli Occupation,

*Noting* the reports presented by the secretariat to the Commissions at its twenty-ninth session under the agenda item entitled “Justice for the Palestinian people: 50 years of Israeli occupation”, which address the

question of apartheid, the premises and approach for calculating the cumulative cost of the occupation, and a communication strategy to support the Palestinian people,<sup>6</sup>

*Noting also* the note by the Secretary-General, in which he referred to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session the report prepared by the secretariat in 2016, on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan,<sup>7</sup> which highlights continuing economic and social deteriorations because of ongoing Israeli policies and practices that violate international law,

1. *Welcomes* the accession of the State of Palestine to international treaties, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and supports efforts for Palestine to accede to all related treaties;

2. *Strongly condemns* continuing Israeli violations of the Charter of the United Nation, international humanitarian law, international human rights law and Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, including the ongoing illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip, the escalation of violence against civilians throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, and the continuing building of settlements and seizure of land by Israel in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, and reaffirms the need to hold Israel accountable for such crimes;

3. *Considers* 2017 the year to intensify efforts to achieve justice in Palestine and the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, given that it coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the direct military occupation of the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, in addition to the Syrian Golan and the Lebanese Shebaa Farms, and the seventieth anniversary of the resolution to partition Palestine;<sup>8</sup>

4. *Commends* the efforts of the secretariat in calculating and estimating the cumulative cost of the Israeli occupation and stresses the importance of doing so using a comprehensive scientific methodology, given that this cost is not limited to economic losses suffered by the Palestinian people for decades but also includes other cumulative costs, some of which cannot be calculated notably human and moral losses;

5. *Calls on* member States to:

(a) Increase official activities supporting the Palestinian people within member States and through diplomatic missions, in coordination with Palestinian institutions and by benefiting from the research and media material prepared by the ESCWA secretariat in that field;

(b) Strive to include an item on the Palestinian cause and the rights of the Palestinian people in general, and on the fiftieth anniversary of the Israeli occupation in as many regional and international events and conferences as possible;

(c) Endeavour to revive the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid and refer the case of apartheid against the Palestinian people to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council of the United Nations;

6. Requests the secretariat to continue supporting the Palestinian people and its institutions, and to increase support in 2017 through the following:

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<sup>6</sup> E/ESCWA/29/8, Parts I, II and III.

<sup>7</sup> A/71/86-E/2016/13.

<sup>8</sup> General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947.

(a) Increase activities on Palestine and organize special activities to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory and the seventieth anniversary of resolution 181 (II), so as to raise awareness of the Palestinian people's rights and suffering and of Israeli violations of international law, and to ensure the widest media coverage possible for those activities;

(b) Publish widely the results of the study on considering Israeli policies towards the Palestinian people as apartheid, by disseminating it to member States, national, regional and international organizations and media institutions, and by organizing activities and producing media material in that regard;

(c) Provide support to the Government of Palestine in implementing the National Policy Agenda 2017-2022, and support Palestinian endeavours to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(d) Build partnerships with international, regional and national bodies, especially with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and strengthen research and technical activities aimed at supporting Palestinian refugees;

(e) Coordinate and collaborate with relevant Palestinian entities to develop an ESCWA media and communications strategy aimed at increasing global awareness of the Palestinian cause and of development challenges in view of the occupation and Israeli violations of Palestinian rights and international law;

(f) Continue to monitor and evaluate the repercussions of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people and their society, economy and infrastructure and for the economic and social development of current and future generations;

(g) Strengthen efforts to calculate the cumulative impact of the Israeli occupation and its practices on the Palestinian people, and, in this context, build partnerships with all relevant actors;

(h) Strive to establish a specialized unit on issues related to Palestine and its people, including monitoring Israeli violations of the Palestinian people's rights and of international law, documenting the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation and its overall cost, supporting Palestinian institutions in their development efforts, and continue supporting the Palestinian people to realize all its rights guaranteed by United Nations resolutions and international treaties and charters;

7. Requests the Executive Secretary to continue implementing the present resolution and submit a report on progress in its implementation to the Commission at its thirtieth session.

8<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting  
15 December 2016

### **327 (XXIX) Working mechanisms of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,*

*Referring to resolution 314 (XXVIII) on the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, adopted at its twenty-eighth session held in Tunis from 15 to 18 September 2014,*

*Referring also to General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development",*

*Referring also to resolution 322 adopted at the second meeting of its Executive Committee, held in Amman from 14 to 16 December 2015, on the ESCWA plan of action to support member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,*

*Taking note* of the key outcomes of the 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, held in Amman on 29 and 30 May 2016, on the future working mechanisms of the Forum,<sup>9</sup>

1. *Affirms* the important role of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development as a regional platform where stakeholders can address sustainable development issues from an integrated perspective, consider formulations, frameworks and follow-up and review mechanisms for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and contribute to building a unified position on the opportunities and challenges of achieving sustainable development in the Arab region;

2. *Invites* presentations of national and regional experiences in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including voluntary national reports on progress in this regard, at the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development to exchange expertise, experiences and lessons learned;

3. *Endorses* the annexed terms of reference, which organize the working mechanisms of the Forum in a manner that guarantees its effectiveness and success in strengthening regional cooperation and coordination to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

#### Annex

### **Arab Forum on Sustainable Development Terms of Reference**

#### **Aim of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development**

The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development aims to stimulate and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to establish follow-up and review frameworks and mechanisms in the Arab region as follows:

- Provide a platform to discuss transnational issues from a perspective that takes into account integration between sectors and that targets government and non-government organizations, including civil society organizations, the private sector, parliaments and think tanks;
- Encourage Arab countries to translate their commitments to the principles and Goals of the 2030 Agenda into integrated strategies, programmes and policies that promote positive interactions between Goals and targets;
- Determine common regional goals and emerging challenges, and promote consistency between national development plans and strategies and regional priorities;
- Strengthen regional and international cooperation to implement, follow up and review the 2030 Agenda, including cooperation between Arab countries and trilateral cooperation, and identify methods to finance development and build strong partnerships between countries and across regions based on peer learning and the exchange of expertise and best practices;
- Assist in mobilizing the necessary implementation methods to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, including the development of statistical systems, science, research, technology and innovation;
- Encourage Arab States to conduct voluntary national reviews in line with guidelines set out in the 2030 Agenda, and submit them to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;

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<sup>9</sup> ESCWA, Report of the 2016 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development (E/ESCWA/SDD/2016/WG.1/Report).

- Establish a network of practitioners to prepare voluntary national reviews, aimed at assisting member States to exchange expertise and lessons learned and to strengthen their capacity to prepare reports and related documents.

### **Venue of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development**

The Arab Forum is held at the headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Beirut. Any Arab State can submit a request to host the Forum to the secretariat for approval subject to the facilities and technical and financial support the hosting State can provide to facilitate the Forum's work and organization.

### **Date and frequency of the sessions of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development**

The Forum is convened annually (or according to necessity) at least three to four months prior to the holding of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, so as to allow sufficient time for the preparation of the report. The Arab Forum is held concurrently with other regional forums organized by the United Nations regional commissions.

### **Secretariat of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development**

ESCWA fulfils the role of the Forum's secretariat. The Forum is organized by a joint committee comprising ESCWA, the League of Arab States and United Nations regional coordination mechanisms.

### **Participants at the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development**

The Forum is attended by representatives of Arab Governments and governmental and non-governmental regional organizations, civil society, academic institutions, the private sector, parliaments and related financial institutions, including regional development banks, so as to ensure partnerships, integrated roles, interaction and cooperation between sustainable development stakeholders in the Arab region.

### **Agenda of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development**

The secretariat determines the Forum's agenda based on proposals by the joint committee. Agenda items are consistent with development priorities in Arab countries and with issues under consideration by the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The agenda may also contain items on initial presentations of voluntary national reports, before submission to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

### **Input of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development**

The Forum provides an opportunity to discuss several regional and national reports and scientific papers on development in the Arab region and on progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the regional level, in line with agreed goals and targets.

The Forum also provides the opportunity to review the outcomes of various regional meetings on the 2030 Agenda and its Goals and targets. The Forum's agenda may contain presentations on the key outcomes of the following:

- (a) Arab ministerial councils and ESCWA subcommittees concerned with development, including those specializing in specific Goals of the 2030 Agenda;
- (b) Regional conferences on the 2030 Agenda, especially those organized under the regional coordination mechanism;



(c) Regional events on various related issues, such as financing development, technology and statistics, and events that highlight the operationalization of partnerships with parliaments, civil society organizations, the private sector and universities.

### **Outcomes of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development**

The Forum issues a summary report submitted to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development as part of regional contributions to the follow-up on the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. Its outcomes are also presented to the ESCWA ministerial session and its Executive Committee and to the Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States and related Arab ministerial councils.

8<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting  
15 December 2016

### **328 (XXIX) Technical cooperation to meet the needs and priorities of member States**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,*

*Recalling* resolution 258 (XXIII) of 12 May 2005 pursuant to which the Technical Cooperation Network was established to enable closer coordination of technical cooperation between ESCWA and member States and thereby contribute to the achievement of their development goals,

*Recalling also* resolution 275 (XXIV) of 11 May 2006 on strengthening technical cooperation, partnership development and resource mobilization,

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 67/226 of 21 December 2012 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in which the General Assembly encourages resident coordinators and United Nations country teams to draw more upon the normative support work and policy expertise that exists within the regional commissions, and requests the regional commissions to further develop their analytical capacities to support country-level development initiatives,

*Recognizing* the importance of technical cooperation programmes, implemented through advisory services and capacity-building and knowledge exchange services, in meeting the specific needs of member States in developing and implementing inclusive and sustainable economic and social development policies,

*Acknowledging* the emerging challenges in the region and the implementation challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which call for more concerted effort in delivering technical cooperation services to member States,

*Noting* that while technical cooperation activities are demand-driven by nature, there is scope for better long-term planning that ensures the alignment of activities with member States' capacities and priorities and guarantees better accountability,

*Recognizing also* the vital role of the Technical Cooperation Network in enhancing the effectiveness of the ESCWA technical cooperation programme and achieving its aims,

*Acknowledging* that the budget of the ESCWA Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation is insufficient to fulfil increasing demands for technical cooperation activities and services, especially with regard to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

1. *Commends* the efforts of the secretariat in linking its technical cooperation work with its other core functions of research and analysis and consensus building to support policy formulation;

2. *Urges* the secretariat to continue strengthening strategic partnerships between United Nations technical cooperation programmes and member States and to promote inclusive South-South cooperation;
3. *Requests* the secretariat to adopt a programmatic approach based on specific plans for long-term technical cooperation between ESCWA and member States, and to enhance accountability;
4. Calls for the revitalization of the Technical Cooperation Network as an essential coordination body, in view of its new terms of reference (annexed to the present resolution);
5. *Urges* Member States of the United Nations and national, regional and international partners to increase their financial support to the activities of the ESCWA technical cooperation programme;
6. *Urges* the secretariat and the Regional United Nations Development Group to fully implement the statement of collaboration between the Development Group and the United Nations regional commissions on supporting member States in implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

#### Annex

#### **Terms of reference of members of the Technical Cooperation Network**

The Technical Cooperation Network shall undertake its activities under the supervision and monitoring of the ESCWA Executive Committee, taking into account the official decision of each State regarding the appointment of a Network focal point.

#### **Terms of reference of the Technical Cooperation Network**

- Providing a platform for the exchange of expertise and lessons learned;
- Facilitating and strengthening ESCWA contributions to the provision of technical cooperation services to member States on issues of common interest;

#### **Updated terms of reference of members of the Technical Cooperation Network**

- Familiarizing ministries and public administrations in member States with the technical cooperation services provided by ESCWA;
- Working with stakeholders to identify their priorities under the general framework of the technical cooperation programme;
- Communicating and coordinating with ESCWA to follow up on the needs of member States
- Coordinating the process of developing a technical cooperation plan with ESCWA and continually updating it;
- Participating in the implementation of ESCWA programmes agreed with a concerned country;
- Contributing to coordinating the evaluation of technical support services provided by ESCWA and monitoring them in collaboration with stakeholders.

#### **Meetings**

The Network shall hold its meeting once a year, or as necessary, prior to the meetings of the Executive Committee so as to present its recommendations at the meetings of the Committee.

8<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting  
15 December 2016

## **II. SESSION THEME: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB REGION**

4. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab region was the main theme of the twenty-ninth ESCWA session. Member States had recommended this theme at the second meeting of the ESCWA Executive Committee, in view of the qualitative shift in the development dialogue that had begun the previous year following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, its 17 Goals and 169 targets, which cover all the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development to ensure the wellbeing of present generations, preserve the rights of future generations and protect economies, societies and the environment. The secretariat presented the theme, with its various dimensions, to representatives of member States at the ministerial level for discussion at three roundtable discussions on various sustainable development issues in the Arab region, under the following main titles: challenges facing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level (E/ESCWA/29/11/WP.1); the impact of conflict and occupation on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (E/ESCWA/29/11/WP.2); and supporting member States in the implementation of the Agenda (E/ESCWA/29/11/WP.3).

### **A. CHALLENGES FACING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL (Item 13 (a) of the provisional agenda)**

5. Under this agenda item, the Deputy Executive Secretary for Programme, Mr. Abdallah al-Dardari, opened the first roundtable discussion. He invited representatives to review key challenges facing their countries in incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals into their national development plans.

6. Mr. Khaled Abdel Saheb Mahdi, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development of Kuwait, presented the challenges facing his country. He said that the first challenge was temporal, reflected in the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals following the adoption of the five-year national development plan in Kuwait, thus requiring its review and adaptation to the 2030 Agenda. The second challenge was communicative, related to identifying a common language (with standardized terms and concepts) between the private sector tasked with leading the development process, the public sector and international organizations. The third challenge was statistical, related to data collection and preparing indicators to measure progress in achieving the Goals and their targets.

7. Mr. Almokhtar Wld Ajay, Minister of Economy and Finance of Mauritania, said that the main challenges lay in fostering partnerships between the Government, the private sector and civil society; achieving decentralization in implementation; ensuring the sustainability of growth; guaranteeing security and stability; and building the capacity of statistical offices to produce data and develop implementation indicators.

8. Mr. Imad Fakhoury, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Jordan, highlighted the statistical challenge requiring capacity-building for national statistical offices; the funding challenge; and challenges facing countries neighbouring those affected by conflict, which faced potential losses in development gains and in their capacity to implement the 2030 Agenda.

9. Mr. Abdulla bin Ahmed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Undersecretary for International Affairs of Bahrain, said that the challenges facing his country in implementing the 2030 Agenda lay in adapting the Agenda to the national vision and specificities, requiring knowledge of the Agenda, consultations between government bodies, the involvement of the private sector and civil society, and coordination with United Nations entities.

10. The discussion focused on statistical, institutional and financing challenges. Representatives highlighted the weakness of the statistical culture in many Arab countries. They also discussed the indicators developed by the United Nations to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals, stating that 240 indicators was too great a number to meet. Some indicators did not correspond to national priorities, and around 70 had never been developed worldwide. Many indicators were interrelated and complex, requiring new methodologies, human capacity-building, and the necessary resources for their accurate development. They called upon the United

Nations to reduce the number of indicators to avoid effort fragmentation. They stressed the importance of the support provided by ESCWA in this area.

11. Participants emphasized that institutional structure was a key factor in the success or failure of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. They said that it was necessary to ensure the sustainability of appropriate institutional structures by nationalizing the Agenda and incorporating it into the work of all government departments, and not limiting its ownership to ministries and certain mechanisms. It was also necessary to identify development priorities to avoid overwhelming national institutions. With regard to the challenge of financing development, they said it should be introduced at varying degrees depending on the country. Development should be financed through an investment approach to guarantee sustainability, and economic modelling should be adopted to determine financing needs. Representatives agreed that methods of funding could include expanding tax bases; improving resource management, especially by combating corruption, bribery and waste; directing investment to increase benefits for citizens; and planning support to assist the poor.

**B. IMPACT OF CONFLICT AND OCCUPATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA  
(Item 13 (b) of the provisional agenda)**

12. The world has launched a new sustainable development process spanning the next 15 years. The Arab region, however, is facing obstacles, war, conflict, instability and the repercussions of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territory - the longest occupation in modern history. Those chronic and emerging circumstances have resulted in great losses to economies and societies, requiring significant resources and capacity to overcome them, and have caused setbacks in the development process that threaten development gains and the achievement of the new Goals.

13. Consequently, ESCWA dedicated a roundtable discussion to the impact of conflict and occupation on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Arab region. The aim was to work with countries to formulate development plans and policies for the next 15 years guided by the 2030 Agenda, which take into account countries' capacities and circumstances and meet their needs and aspirations.

14. Under this agenda item, Ms. Rima Khalaf, Executive Secretary of ESCWA, opened the second roundtable discussion by highlighting the repercussions of conflict for the Arab region. She said that half of all Arab countries had witnessed at least one round of conflict over the past five years, which was one of the highest rates globally. Those conflicts had caused widespread destruction and humanitarian disasters, and led to the largest wave of displacement worldwide since the Second World War. She added that although Arab citizens constituted only 5 per cent of the world's population, Arab refugees made up 60 per cent of total refugees. Such circumstances had caused the loss of development gains, with indicators falling to levels recorded in the 1970s. She invited participants to review the impact of conflict and occupation of their countries and consider means to tackle extremism in the region.

15. Mr. Mohamed Said Al Saidi, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Yemen, said that conflict in his country had led to shortages in food, medication, housing and shelter. The number of internally displaced persons had reached 2.5 million, basic services had deteriorated, infrastructure was crumbling, and poverty and unemployment rates were rising, with no solution in sight. Regarding extremism, researchers could not unanimously agree on a definition. It could be the result of oppression, corruption, or the lack of good governance and citizen participation.

16. Ms. Mashaer Ahmad Alamine, Minister of Welfare and Social Security of the Sudan, said that conflict did not end by signing peace agreements and halting military operations; its repercussions were felt for decades. She stressed the need to move from a humanitarian relief approach to a development and rebuilding approach, and to adopt positive discrimination in the development process in conflict-affected areas of the Sudan. She added that international cooperation was vital to achieving peace and security, followed by development. She said that development was a tool to combat extremism, which was not a cultural

phenomenon but rather a result of the absence of security and political participation, weak State institutions, youth marginalization, poverty and unemployment.

17. Mr. Bashar Jouma, President of the Office of the Prime Minister of Palestine, said that sustainable development was not possible under occupation. However, the Palestinian people had made accomplishments in several areas, as described in reports on the Millennium Development Goals. Palestine was preparing a new development plan for the period 2017-2022, which incorporated the 2030 Agenda and relied on mobilizing its own resources given the reduction in development aid and that donors were renegeing on 60 per cent of their commitments. He added that Palestine was currently free from the extremism spreading throughout the region, but could potentially fall victim given the continuing blockade and occupation.

18. Mr. Abdulkareem Abdalla Shalal Al Janabi, Deputy, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Iraq, reviewed the economic and social repercussions of conflict, including rising poverty, resource shortages, infrastructure destruction, environmental pollution and increased social problems, especially because of displacement. He added that extremism was caused by foreign intervention, marginalization, weak rule of law, and the absence of tolerance. However, Iraq was continuing to prepare development plans and programmes, while combatting terrorism.

19. Mr. Ramzi Ezzediine Ramzi, Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the Syrian Arab Republic, highlighted United Nations efforts to launch a comprehensive political process aimed at ending the conflict and providing humanitarian aid. The Syrian people alone had the right to determine their future, with the assistance of the United Nations. He said that hope in a political solution must not be lost, adding that continued conflict would exacerbate the spread of extremist that must be tackled through a peaceful settlement and a regime rooted in good governance, to ensure the right of the Syrian people to a secure and dignified life.

20. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Jordan spoke of his country's experience in tackling the Syrian refugee crisis, turning it into a positive opportunity by employing 15-20 per cent of refugees and assimilating 90 per cent of Syrian students into schools. Representatives said that the region should document the positive lessons learned from the experiences of countries that had taken in the waves of refugees, and disseminate them to the international community for assistance in developing tools and amending international charters on refugee issues. The representative of the World Health Organization expressed her concern regarding the unprecedented targeting of health facilities, doctors and paramedics in conflict-affected countries, which not only violated international treaties but also increased people's desperation.

C. SUPPORTING MEMBER STATES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGENDA  
(Item 13 (b) of the provisional agenda)

21. A third roundtable discussion was held under this item, aimed at discussing the way forward in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the national level by focusing on the support requested from development partners and international organizations. Representatives considered the tools necessary for conducting research, formulating policies and building capacity to work with countries on developing a process for implementing the 2030 Agenda based on clear development priorities derived from countries' circumstances, and on researching new funding sources for regional projects on the Sustainable Development Goals.

22. Mr. Abdallah al-Dardari chaired the roundtable discussion, indicating the magnitude of the task facing countries and the international community in implementing the 2030 Agenda. He said that the United Nations, including ESCWA, was prepared to support member States in developing policies and incorporating the Agenda in national development plans.

23. Mr. Michael Gerber, Ambassador of Switzerland to Qatar, described his country's vision for international cooperation in implementing the 2030 Agenda. He reviewed partnership models between Switzerland and several Arab countries. He said that Switzerland had played an active role in preparing the

Agenda, and had submitted a report to the United Nations on the initial steps it intended to take towards its implementation. There was a broad and varied scope for partnership with Arab countries. He added that the challenges were numerous and similar in nature across countries, and that the Agenda was ambitious and its implementation would not be possible without cooperation. One of the Goals focused on partnerships and cooperation, concerted efforts, knowledge exchange, and identifying co-financing methods. He said that there were two approaches to cooperation. The direct approach, including technical support from Switzerland to several ESCWA member States, such as Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen, where support was focused at the political level; and the Syrian Arab Republic, where support involved attempts at political mediation and to launch a peace process. Under the indirect approach, negotiations had begun with Gulf Cooperation Council countries to mobilize assistance for development. Such a cooperation framework entailed expertise and capacity exchanges, documenting future coordination, and identifying areas of cooperation with the private sector to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

24. Mr. Mustafa Kamel, a professor at Cairo University, discussed the role of scientific research and academia in implementing the 2030 Agenda. He began by mentioning the role of ESCWA in enriching knowledge of economic and social affairs in the Arab region. He affirmed the effective presence of research centres worldwide since the topic of sustainable development was raised, which called for the protection of the environment and resources. He added that scientists, research centres and universities played a key three-pronged role in research. Firstly, during the preliminary research stage, many goals were researched to understand what was meant by sustainable consumption patterns, for example, and whether they were similar across countries; what was meant by safe cities for all; how to transform a goal into a commitment and an indicator; and how to nationalize indicators. Secondly, when proposing alternative policies and sharing success stories in eradicating poverty, for example. Thirdly, when preparing reports presented by Governments. Reports should, however, not be limited to Governments, which strove to present a rosy picture. Government shortfalls in implementation should be highlighted to build a realistic image of achievements and challenges, and of how to surmount difficulties. He said that it was not possible to overcome obstacles without evaluation. It was also necessary to empower research centres, because providing them with support benefited Governments - international cooperation was key in that regard.

25. Mr. Juraj Riečan, Director of the ESCWA Statistics Division, discussed the statistical tools currently under development. Representatives agreed on the importance of the statistics issue and of collecting reliable data to monitor the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Challenges included the multi-levelled nature of the global framework for statistics sources on Goal indicators, which should be simplified. He added that indicators were not statistics, and their calculation required primary data. Data collection necessitated significant efforts and resources from national statistical offices, and statistical programmes must be linked to the policy priorities of Arab countries and the region, so that statistics were derived from and reflected countries' priorities. Processing the required statistics must entail abandoning traditional methods and adopting new ones. The aim was not to collect additional data, but rather to coordinate fragmented initiatives under an organized framework. He said that it was not possible to coordinate between United Nations entities without involving member States, which could be achieved through the Statistical Commission, the intergovernmental mechanism tasked with directing such efforts at the national and regional levels, and by committing to the functions assigned to specialized agencies so as to avoid duplication, rivalry and wasted efforts and resources. When bridging gaps, it was necessary to follow quality standards and ensure realistic, objective and impartial data. Evaluating data availability must comply with countries' needs and policy priorities. It was important to adopt measurable indicators, and to focus on indicators reflecting the region's circumstances. He added that communication between data producers and users and the development of strategies and action plans were vital. Without a sound foundation for statistics management, it was not possible to tackle challenges facing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

26. Mr. Khaled Abdel Shafi, Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States of the United Nations Development Programme, discussed a guide prepared by the Programme. He stressed the importance of Arabizing tools, plans and the guide when dealing with Arab Governments in implementing the 2030 Agenda. He said that the Agenda and its Goals should be incorporated into all national plans and strategies, especially

budgets. The implementation of the Goals should be expedited by identifying obstacles and developing tools for containing and overcoming them; and by focusing on several Goals in one process, requiring coordination and integration at the national level between all United Nations organizations; the Agenda was broad necessitating the involvement of all their respective specializations. He said that coordination already existed between ESCWA and the United Nations Development Group, which had agreed on the various roles and outcomes for 2017. Tools would be developed for countries and they would be offered assistance in using them.

27. Mr. Adib Nehme, ESCWA regional adviser, discussed methods for identifying interlinkages between Goals and between the 2030 Agenda and national development plans. He said that the 2030 Agenda should inject new life into national action, and national plans should be used to elaborate on the Agenda. Implementing the Agenda required innovation to benefit from political, cultural, economic and social experiences facing Arab countries, so as to contribute to the production of required knowledge. The Agenda was also transformative in nature, far removed from the Millennium Development Goals. It could not be fragmented, and its Goals were means to achieving its essence. It was therefore necessary to consider it an integrated whole, concerning people, the world, prosperity, peace and partnership. He added that the large number of targets and indicators must be classified logically; some countries had already attempted to do so. He stressed that the Agenda was not an additional development plan: it was necessary to harmonize it with national plans with regard to contents, methodology and general principles; and to refer to successful experiences in the Arab region when possible.

28. Mr. Mohamed Hedi Bchir, Chief of the Modelling and Forecasting Section, presented a Sustainable Development Goal simulator model. He said that ESCWA had developed its initial concept, with financial support from Saudi Arabia. The model could be used by all countries as a policymaking tool, and for selecting between suggested policies and identifying the interlinkages between Goals, and between Goals and macroeconomic policy. The aim of the model was to identify the consequences of achieving a certain Goal on other Goals and on a country's situation. The achievement of one Goal may lead to the achievement of another, a Goal might not be achievable without achieving another, or a Goal might be achieved at the expense of another. The weighting process, however, remained a national and political issue. Countries must give a weight to each Goal, in line with their needs and priorities.

29. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights focused on the rights approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda, entailing active and broad involvement in developing and implementing policies and programmes at all levels; guaranteeing non-discrimination in its implementation to include everyone; and ensuring accountability by eliminating corruption, evaluating government performance and securing people's rights.

30. Representatives focused on the importance of training and development in statistical work, using new methods to collect data for non-traditional indicators. They agreed that, given its importance, statistics was an implementation tool. They also discussed the role of academia as a necessary platform for adopting the 2030 Agenda; it was necessary to link between science and policy. Research centres played a role in building and developing capacity, supporting local governments, and disseminating a culture of sustainable development. They added that it was important to forge productive partnerships between research centres, private statistical offices and the national statistical office in a country, and between the latter and policymakers. They requested ESCWA to address non-traditional issues in its reports, such as the solidarity economy and participatory economics, which its impartial position allowed it to tackle.

31. They added that the main aim of efforts related to the 2030 Agenda was developing policies for its implementation, rather than its monitoring. They emphasized the leadership role of Governments in the Agenda, and in coordinating between United Nations agencies to ensure the optimal use of available and fragmented resources.

### III. KEY ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENTS

32. Participants at the senior officials segment discussed key issues and developments in the region that ESCWA had worked and followed up on over the previous biennium, including justice for the Palestinian people, the outcomes of the 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, achieving social justice in the Arab region, and gender mainstreaming in public institutions. They also addressed procedural issues regarding the Commission's working mechanism for the previous and coming biennium. They reviewed and discussed the proposed strategic framework of the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019, and amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017 to include urgent priorities.

#### A. OUTCOMES OF THE ARAB FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (Item 8 of the provisional agenda)

33. With reference to document E/ESCWA/29/7, the representative of the secretariat presented the outcomes of the 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, a high-level regional platform for dialogue and coordination on mechanisms for the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda in the Arab region. He said that ESCWA had organized the Forum in collaboration with the League of Arab States, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Population Fund, along with other members of the regional coordination mechanism, and in partnership with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation of Jordan. The Forum had held its third meeting in Amman, on 29 and 30 May 2016.

34. The representative of the secretariat stressed the integrated and interrelated nature of the 2030 Agenda. Integration meant the absence of fragmentation between the Agenda's components, including the preamble and declaration; linkages between the planning, implementation and follow-up phases; and commitment to its equally important challenges, namely peace and security, poverty, equality, environmental degradation, climate change and frequent disasters.

35. The Forum had recommended the importance of human rights in implementing the 2030 Agenda and adopting a development plan that left nobody behind. Commitment to the rights approach required all parties active in development to conform to a framework of partnership and coordination, including Governments, the private sector and civil society. He added that the Forum, held every year to ensure continued dialogue and the exchange of expertise, was an opportunity to review progress in harmonizing national development plans and strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals.

36. The rights approach called for by the Forum shall have a significant impact when analysing options and choosing between interests and justice in policymaking at the national, regional and global levels. That approach required creative solutions, novel policy formulation, and the development of innovative mechanisms to evaluate feasibility and outcomes in the short, medium and long term.

37. The Forum's work had covered three key phases, namely knowledge accumulation, follow-up with member States on progress in preparing the 2030 Agenda, and analysing circumstances and possible orientations following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Its outcomes constituted inputs to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, whose 2017 theme was "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". The representative of the secretariat proposed granting an institutional nature to the Arab Forum by adopting terms of reference for its work, a draft of which was distributed to participants at the session for their consideration and comments.

38. In the ensuing discussion, participants noted the Forum's efforts in the transitional period from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals, and stressed its important role in achieving the latter in the Arab region.



39. Participants discussed the role of the Forum in supporting countries in preparing national plans suitable for implementing and following up on the 2030 Agenda, containing over 200 indicators, in a process involving all specialized departments to address issues that were subsidiary to the Goals.
40. Representatives said that the Forum would play a role in developing statistics and strengthening coordination between ESCWA and member States in preparing statistics on the Sustainable Development Goals, provided that data was received from national statistical offices as well as United Nations agencies.
41. Participants requested technical support from the ESCWA secretariat in preparing voluntary reports, for submission to the Economic and Social Council over the next 15 years until 2030, to periodically follow up and monitor the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Arab countries.
42. Representatives stressed the need to accurately relay information on the Forum's work to the Arab public. They proposed the establishment of national forums modelled on the Arab Forum to act as a link between the Arab public and the Forum.
43. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that part of the role of ESCWA was to support national efforts and complement national teams working on the Goals, but leadership and ownership in preparing national reports and implementing national plans must remain a national responsibility.
44. The representative of the secretariat said that the Arab report would be published every four years, in parallel with the global report, to measure countries' progress in achieving the Goals. Those Goals would be at the centre of all ESCWA activities until 2030, including studies and research on the Goals and their national and transboundary dimensions.

B. JUSTICE FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE – 50 YEARS OF ISRAELI OCCUPATION  
(Item 9 of the provisional agenda)

45. The secretariat ensured that an item of the provisional agenda would be dedicated to Palestine, given the deteriorating economic and social circumstances under the Israeli occupation, especially the recurrent attacks on Gaza and the resulting grave human and material losses impeding progress in all development indicators.
46. The secretariat considered the issue of justice for the Palestinian people under three main headings: apartheid (E/ESCWA/29/8(Part I)); the premises and approach for calculating the cumulative cost of the occupation (E/ESCWA/29/8(Part II)); and a communication strategy to support the Palestinian people (E/ESCWA/29/8(Part III)).
47. Regarding apartheid, the representative of the secretariat briefly summarized an ESCWA study under preparation on whether Israeli practices and policies amounted to apartheid. He reviewed the study's approach and pillars, the history of the prohibition of apartheid under international law, the nature of apartheid in South Africa, and apartheid in the modern human rights discourse. He said that the study considered the policies and practices adopted by Israel against Palestinians with Israeli nationality; Palestinians in East Jerusalem; Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; and Palestinian refugees living outside Mandatory Palestine, given that the Palestinian people were divided into those four groups. He added that the study reviewed arguments inconsistent with apartheid, to open up additional research avenues.
48. With regard to calculating the cumulative cost of occupation, the representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the details of the proposed methodology for calculating the cumulative cost of the Israeli occupation and its practices and activities. The study proposes categorizing Israeli practices so as to develop the required methodology. Despite unanimous agreement on the damage caused to Palestinian economic growth by Israeli practices and policies, analytical efforts had focused on calculating costs in specific sectors, such as the agricultural sector, or calculating the impact of certain policies and practices on some areas but not others, such as Area C in the West Bank. Consequently, there was a need for a methodology to measure the

overall cost of the occupation, while stressing that the lives of individuals and peoples could not be assigned a material value.

49. He added that developing a methodology to calculate the cost of the occupation for Palestine was an unprecedented effort in terms of its depth and scope. The methodology aimed to accurately determine the cost of occupation in an integrated manner across sectors and at all levels. Data collection from various sectors over long periods, and identifying links between Israeli policies and practices and their cost for the Palestinian economy and society, would improve understanding of the dimensions of the Israeli occupation and its repercussions for the lives of Palestinians.

50. Concerning the media strategy, the representative of the secretariat presented a proposal on media support for the Palestinian people and its institutions in their struggle to ensure their inalienable rights and achieve justice and peace. The proposed media strategy suggested using documentary and analytical material produced by ESCWA and other international organizations on rights, including the right to self-determination and to justice, and on ways to hold the Israeli authorities accountable for their rights violations.

51. Representatives noted the multi-level efforts to support the Palestinian people. They also commended the quality and documentary value of the studies. They stressed the need to ensure that the outcomes of those studies reached high-level international events to guarantee their desired impact on policy, to galvanize support for the Palestinian people, and to expose the reality and repercussions of Israeli policies and practices.

52. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of the secretariat confirmed its commitment to delivering certain messages, notably Palestinians' commitment to their rights, the unacceptability of Israel continuing its practices undeterred given that they threatened the international system as a whole, and the need for any solution to comply with the fundamental values of international law.

53. The representative of the secretariat stressed the centrality of the Palestinian case in its work, despite the current conflict in the region. If those wars ended, the Palestinian case would remain a source of tension and hostility in the region. He added that there could be no peace without justice, and no justice without empowering the Palestinian people to attain their rights.

C. ACHIEVING SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE ARAB REGION: FROM CONCEPT AND VISION  
TO POLICY AND PRACTICE  
(Item 10 of the provisional agenda)

54. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation under this item on a guide for incorporating the principles of social justice in the development plans and programmes of Arab countries (E/ESCWA/29/9). He said that the preparation of the guide came under a project to strengthen social justice in selected Arab countries, funded by the United Nations Development Account and endorsed pursuant to the Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region adopted at the twenty-eighth ESCWA session. The guide stemmed from the central focus on social justice in the 2030 Agenda and modern international treaties. It highlighted the practical steps and tools used to develop policies that upheld social justice in Arab countries, according to their needs and institutional, economic, social, political and cultural structures.

55. He said that the guide included illustrative points on incorporating the principles of social justice in national plans, the relationship between social justice and the 2030 Agenda, institutional working mechanisms, and operational models. It set out analytical tools, global references and practical experiences that could be benefited from.

56. In the ensuing discussion, participants stressed the centrality of social justice, and the need to link it to the 2030 Agenda and dedicate a larger section of the guide to the relationship between social justice and the Agenda because those interlinkages provided an opportunity to promote social justice along with many other Goals and to tackle the issue broadly and comprehensively, thus reaching vulnerable groups. The

representatives of Iraq, Morocco, the Sudan and Yemen discussed their successful experiences in social protection, which not only included direct financial assistance, but also safety nets, health insurance programmes and multi-sectoral plans implemented in coordination with specialized ministries. These experiences could enrich the guide and add value to the experiences therein from across the world.

57. Representatives suggested developing awareness-raising programmes on justice, including for those who benefited from direct social assistance programmes. They also suggested adapting protection patterns and support programmes to rapid changes in social and economic circumstances; promoting the role of civil society, especially in transitional countries; and designing training programmes for the public sector in preparing financial statistics.

58. Participants agreed on the need to address social justice issues under a framework of economic policies and international treaties that benefited the poor, and that considered justice as an auxiliary to the economy rather than a burden. They also proposed adopting indicators for measuring justice mainstreaming in institutions and programmes, to ensure consistency with the various indicators of the 2030 Agenda.

59. Participants discussed the difficulties in reaching poor and vulnerable groups in times of conflict. They stressed the need to operationalize institutional and legislative frameworks and to allocate necessary resources for efficiently implementing social protection programmes.

60. The representative of the secretariat said that the guide built upon several schools of thought, and included experiences from across the world as references, as well as successful Arab experiences set out in the form of frameworks, case studies and exercises. The report was being prepared under a participatory framework, with reference to consultations from a subregional workshop held by Gulf Cooperation Council countries. He added that, in mid-2017, a regional workshop would be held to test the guide and launch it after ensuring consistency with countries' needs and specificities. A section would be dedicated to conflict-affected and unstable countries.

#### D. GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS (Item 11 of the provisional agenda)

61. With reference to document E/ESCWA/29/10, the representative of the secretariat made a presentation on a project to mainstream gender in public institutions. He said that the project was part of efforts to achieve Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals on gender equality, and the goals set out in the Beijing Platform for Action on mainstreaming gender to achieve gender equality and empower women. The project built upon achievements in implementing the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on gender equality and women's empowerment. He described ESCWA experiences in this field and how to transfer expertise to member States by harmonizing the Action Plan with Arab circumstances, so as to develop the first Arab framework for measuring progress in achieving gender equality in public institutions. The Commission took note of the project and participants expressed opinions on how to adapt the technical guide issued by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) on consistency between performance indicators and the region's priorities, to ensure that the guide could be used as a reference tool for decision-makers.

62. In the ensuing discussion, participants agreed on the high priority of women's issues in the United Nations and the Arab region, and on the importance of ensuring that projects stemmed from the region's needs and specificities and were consistent with its characteristics and culture.

63. Some representative discussed successful experiences in their countries. In Oman, the development plan for the upcoming period focused on equity, empowerment and social cohesion, so as to mainstream gender in government and non-government institutions and the private sector. In Iraq, women had been allocated a share of seats in decision-making and public sector positions. Departments for empowering women were under development, tasked with providing gender statistics to ministries. In Morocco, gender and gender-sensitive

statistics were being mainstreamed in legislative reform, budgets and development plans. In Yemen, women were represented at the National Dialogue, whose results included allocating to women a share of government positions at all levels, resulting in significant benefits for the country.

64. Participants stressed the need to amend the United Nations Action Plan for application in national institutions with different targets and indicators, and to determine the desired outcomes. They agreed on the importance of limiting some concepts in the project and avoiding negative and biased language; and of testing the Action Plan in public institutions before its launch and dissemination.

E. REVISED DRAFT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2018-2019  
(Item 7 of the provisional agenda)

65. The representative of the secretariat said that the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019 had been presented to the Executive Committee at its second meeting in December 2015. Countries had requested time to comment thereon. The secretariat had received and taken into account comments from Saudi Arabia, before submitting the revised draft to the United Nations Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for approval.

66. Participants asked why the issue of young people had been overlooked in the revised strategic framework, given that it was at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. They requested a review to highlight disparities in achievements between Arab countries, especially since many had progressed significantly in various fields in a manner that could be supported with data. The representative of the secretariat said that ESCWA was working on a field project on young people in the region.

F. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION  
(Item 5 of the provisional agenda)

1. *Implementation of the Tunis Declaration and other resolutions adopted  
by the Commission at its twenty-eighth session*

67. The representative of the secretariat reviewed the measures taken by the secretariat to implement the Tunis Declaration and other resolutions adopted by the Commissions at its twenty-eighth session, held in Tunis from 15 to 18 September 2014. The secretariat had issued 10 studies on the various aspects of social justice, on efforts to incorporate social justice into the Sustainable Development Goals, and on building the capacity of member States in incorporating social justice in public policies. The secretariat was preparing a guide on the issue, as set out under item 10 of the provisional agenda for the current session.

68. The representative of the secretariat said that the session's agenda included items on several resolutions issued at the twenty-eighth ESCWA session. The concerned divisions gave presentations on progress in their implementation.

69. Participants stressed the importance of coordination between ESCWA and other United Nations organizations working in the region on specialized issues, to avoid duplication and resource waste.

70. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that avoiding duplication was an ESCWA priority. He identified two endorsed mechanisms for ensuring coordination, namely periodic meetings with other United Nations regional commissions, and the regional coordination mechanism headed by ESCWA comprising all United Nations entities in the region. He added that ESCWA differed from other United Nations organizations in its varied competencies and in giving a regional dimension to the issues it tackled. The headings may be repeated, but the contents changed. In conclusion, the Chair of the meeting urged member States to submit to the secretariat their reports on progress in implementing the resolutions issued at the twenty-eighth ESCWA session, for publication on the ESCWA website. The representative of Tunisia said that his country had

prepared a report on progress in implementing the Tunis Declaration, especially regarding women, family and care for the elderly, and requested its dissemination.

## *2. Reports of the Executive Committee on its meetings*

71. The representative of the secretariat said that the Executive Committee, which member States had granted decision-making powers following its redesignation from the Technical Committee, had carried out the functions of the Commission in the period between the two ministerial sessions. The Committee had held two meetings since the twenty-eighth ESCWA session: the first in Amman on 8 and 9 June 2015, whose report was set out in document E/ESCWA/2015/EC.1/8/Report; and the second in Amman from 14 to 16 December 2015, whose report was contained in document E/ESCWA/2015/EC.2/9/Report. The most prominent decision taken by the Executive Committee included adopting the ESCWA action plan for implementing the 2030 Agenda, making ESCWA one of the first United Nations organizations with a clear vision for supporting member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda. The Chair took note of the two reports, and commended the work of the Executive Committee in the period between the two ministerial sessions.

## *3. Reports of the ESCWA subsidiary bodies on their sessions*

72. Under this item, the Commission reviewed the reports of the ESCWA subsidiary bodies that had not been presented to the Executive Committee, as follows:

- (1) Report of the seventh session of the Committee on Women, held in Muscat on 20 and 21 January (E/ESCWA/ECW/2015/IG.1/7/Report);
- (2) Report of the tenth session of the Committee on Trade Liberalization, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development, held in Cairo on 22 and 23 November 2015 (E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/IG.2/9/Report);
- (3) Report of the sixteenth session of the Committee on Transport, held in Cairo on 23 and 24 November 2015 (E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/IG.3/6/Report).

73. The directors of the concerned divisions reviewed the reports. With regard to the report of the Committee on Women, the Muscat Declaration: Towards the Achievement of Gender Justice in the Arab Region was issued, which provided a new approach to tackling gender justice by focusing on equality and accountability; and by preparing a study on the economic cost of violence against women, in collaboration with UN Women. The Committee on Trade Liberalization, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development had made recommendations to lift the remaining restrictions on trade flows within the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA), support economic transformations, incorporate trade policies into national plans to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and prepare scenarios for launching an Arab customs union and models for measuring its impact. The Committee on Transport had decided to redesignate the agreements on road and rail transport to state “in the Arab region” instead of “in the Arab Mashreq”, and to strengthen road safety systems.

74. In response to a representative’s proposal on developing a procedural plan to implement the recommendations made by the ESCWA subsidiary bodies, the representative of the secretariat said that the issue was in the hands of member States according to their respective specificities, clarifying that the secretariat published periodic reports on the implementation of recommendations concerning it, and included a permanent item on the agendas for all meetings to request reports from member States on their progress.

75. In response to a question on ESCWA evaluations of obstacles impeding the establishment of an Arab customs union, the representative of the secretariat said that ESCWA had examined, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, the various challenges facing the development of a customs union, notably disparities in economic structures and customs revenue between Arab countries. It was also necessary to complete

GAFTA, identify the detailed effects of establishing the union for each country, and consider a compensation mechanism. The Chair announced the adoption of the reports of the ESCWA subsidiary bodies.

#### 4. *Programme performance during the biennium 2014-2015*

76. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on programme performance, indicating that the implementation rate rose from 96 per cent over the period 2012-2013 to 98 per cent over the period 2014-2015. He added that the political instability and protracted conflicts in some Arab countries was hampering the implementation of ESCWA activities, but had not prevented ESCWA from providing support to countries in need, especially in terms of capacity-building activities. Other challenges facing ESCWA work included budget cuts for the period 2014-2015, especially in the area of technical cooperation, budget cuts for programme support, and changes to existing management systems.

77. Participants noted the ability of ESCWA to respond to increasing requests for technical support from member States, in view of conflicts and cuts to budgets allocated for such support, and the almost optimal implementation levels reached by ESCWA. They requested a review of the process to identify priorities and formulate work programmes, by promoting consultations between member States, achieving a balance between them in the distribution of capacity-building activities, and maximizing benefits from national and regional expertise. Some representatives proposed presenting programme performance evaluations in the form of a matrix showing accomplished and non-accomplished activities, and reasons for non-accomplishment. They requested support from ESCWA in building capacity for producing data and statistical indicators, especially to monitor progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

78. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that ESCWA had received funding from the United Nations Development Account to implement a statistics capacity-building programme to monitor the implementation of the Goals, in collaboration with nine United Nations entities.

#### 5. *Technical cooperation and regional advisory services*

79. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the technical cooperation activities undertaken by ESCWA over the biennium 2014-2015, including advisory services and capacity-building for member States, funded by the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation, the United Nations Development Account and extrabudgetary resources. He highlighted several successful experiences under the technical cooperation framework, and the challenges it faced.

80. Participants enquired about the methodology for determining the fields of projects funded by the United Nations Development Account and technical cooperation activities funded from extrabudgetary sources, and their impact on donors' plans and priorities, stressing the need to follow the ESCWA terms of reference. They called for strengthening activities on social welfare, and the management of water and technological resources. Some asked why statistical and economic integration issues had a 50 per cent share of advisory services, following the Tunis Declaration that had given priority to social justice issues. Representatives tackled the problem of communication between the secretariat and member States in the field of technical cooperation, stemming from the absence of focal points appointed by national authorities, and requested a fundamental solution to the issue. The representative of the Sudan noted the fruitful support provided by ESCWA to the National Dialogue in his country.

81. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs identified the areas of projects funded by the United Nations Development Account. Activities funded from extrabudgetary sources were determined following a direct request from member States, like Saudi Arabia that had requested technical assistance in developing its tenth national plan, and Yemen in preparing its reconstruction plan. ESCWA also provided technical assistance when conflict in a country required interference to analyse the resulting economic and social effects. In Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic, for example, reconstruction dialogues had been launched, attended by over 1,600 experts. Such

efforts were set out under the ECWA terms of reference and competencies. Donors had no influence over the technical or substantive aspects of projects. The representative of the secretariat stressed the need to identify a final solution to the problem of communication via focal points, and requested assistance from member States on that issue.

#### *6. Financial status of the Commission*

82. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the allocations and expenditure for ESCWA programmes and projects funded from the regular budget and extrabudgetary sources over the biennium 2014-2015, compared with the financial status for the biennium 2012-2013. He said that economic development and integration activities had been allocated the largest share of the budget. The full allocation of the budget showed that meeting the region's development needs required further contributions, especially since the General Assembly was requesting increased budgetary efficiency.

83. Participants asked whether programmes' implementation levels were linked to finances or outcomes, and why funding earmarked for technical cooperation had dropped in the regular budget to 7 per cent, and how to increase it. The representative of the secretariat that implementation levels were linked to programming, especially the number of accomplished outcomes compared with expected accomplishments. Over the past two years, requests for technical assistance had doubled. Participants welcomed the secretariat's efforts to develop its administrative and financial systems.

#### G. MANAGEMENT ISSUES (Item 6 of the provisional agenda)

##### *1. Evaluation of the work of the Commission*

84. The representative of the secretariat reviewed the ESCWA evaluation of its subprogrammes, covering their importance and effectiveness over the period 2014-2015, lessons learned, the main challenges and future steps. He said that the key objectives of the evaluation policy adopted by ESCWA in 2014 were to improve accountability and strengthen administrative processes to secure outcomes and increase potential for continual development. The evaluation process had included the ESCWA Technology Centre, the Centre for Women, and the Emerging and Conflict Related Issues Division by reviewing three elements: publications; field work with staff, partners, stakeholders and counterparts; and technical activities.

85. Representatives requested clarification on the funding level allocated to the evaluation process in projects funded by the Development Account, and the feasibility of evaluating documents and studies at the expense of field visits. They questioned communication levels with beneficiaries to increase objectivity and measure impact, and the absence of weaknesses in evaluation reports. They proposed that ESCWA conduct a comprehensive institutional evaluation every five years to measure its ability to fulfil its functions.

86. The representative of the secretariat said that the regular budget share allocated to evaluation was less than 1 per cent, given the lack of resources, 2 per cent for projects funded by the Development Account, and 2-4 per cent according to recommendations made by the United Nations evaluation team. The review of documents and studies was less costly than field visits and related travel expenses. He said that taking into account the views of beneficiaries would contribute to developing more effective recommendations, and that the impact of a project, especially regarding capacity-building, was not clear directly after its completion. The United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services had conducted a comprehensive evaluation of ESCWA and field visits in several member States, whose reports were available on the ESCWA website.

*2. Proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017*

87. The representative of the secretariat presented the proposed amendments to the programme of work, including various new and reformulated activities to keep pace with regional developments, and to focus work on social justice issues in view of the Tunis Declaration issued at the twenty-eighth ESCWA session.

88. Representatives asked whether the addition of those activities would result in amendments to budgets and implementation schedules, especially those related to implementing the 2030 Agenda. They stressed the need for those activities to bring added value to the programme of work, and to adopt qualitative indicators when measuring accomplishments. They also requested strengthening coordination with member States to identify priorities, promoting the role of civil society organizations, and assistance in resource mobilization.

89. The representative of the secretariat said that adding activities would not entail any consequences. They were the result of the extended period between preparing and implementing the programme. Regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Executive Committee had adopted a decision on that issue and was awaiting the decision of the Fifth Committee of the United Nations on its financial consequences. ESCWA had developed an alternative plan in case it did not receive the desired funding. Whatever the outcome, ESCWA would continue to provide technical support to member States.

**IV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION  
OF THE COMMISSION**

90. At its final plenary meeting, held on 15 December 2016, the Commission adopted the Doha Declaration on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and draft resolutions issued at the senior officials segment, for submission to member States in the final report.

**V. ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

**A. DATE AND VENUE**

91. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia held its twenty-ninth session in Doha, from 13 to 15 December 2016. It convened eight plenary meetings, at which it discussed its agenda items covering issues of concern to member States.

92. At a side event, ESCWA and the Government of Qatar signed a memorandum of understanding on technical cooperation, pursuant to which ESCWA shall provide technical assistance to support the Qatari national development plan. Those services shall focus on priorities agreed upon by both parties.

93. At the opening meeting of the ministerial segment, the secretariat showed a short film on the first Model ESCWA in the Arab region, an initiative launched by the secretariat to interact with young people. Thirty-five students from the American University of Beirut took part. They had prepared research papers on implementing the 2030 Agenda in Arab countries, with each student representing a country or regional or international body. The students agreed that it was necessary to focus on what binds, rather than on what divides, Arab countries.

**B. CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS BY STATES MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND/OR  
ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES THAT ARE NOT MEMBERS OF ESCWA  
TO PARTICIPATE AS OBSERVERS IN THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION  
OF THE COMMISSION  
(Agenda item 4)**

94. Rule 63 of the ESCWA Rules of procedure states that the Commission may invite any Member State of the United Nations or of a specialized agency that is not a member of the Commission to participate in its



deliberations on any matter that the Commission considers to be of particular concern to that State. A State thus invited shall not have the right to vote, but may submit proposals which may be put to the vote at the request of any member of the Commission.

95. In accordance with that rule, the secretariat, at the twenty-ninth ESCWA session, reviewed requests by member States and took the necessary decisions. Algeria, Niger, Switzerland, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the secretariat of the League of Arab States, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, the Federation of Chambers of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Organization for Community Responsibility, the General Union Of Chambers Of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for Arab Countries, the Saudi Fund for Development, the International Chamber of Commerce in Qatar, the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris, the Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting in Qatar, the Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations in Beirut, and non-governmental organizations in ESCWA member States and non-member States endorsed by the Economic and Social Council participated as observers at the twenty-ninth ESCWA session. Moreover, the International Organization for Migration participated as an observer in the session for the first time since the General Assembly approved its membership of the United Nations system as a sister organization.

#### C. OPENING OF THE SESSION

96. The session was opened in two stages. The senior officials segment was opened on the morning of Tuesday, 13 December 2016. The ministerial segment was opened on the afternoon of Wednesday, 14 December 2016.

##### 1. *Senior officials segment*

97. At the opening of the senior officials segment, the representative of Bahrain that chaired the previous session, Mr. Toufic Ahmad Almansour, Director of the International Organization Department at the Foreign Ministry, thanked Qatar for hosting the current session, and commended the ESCWA secretariat's efforts and member States for their participation and cooperation with Bahrain during its time as Chair. He stressed the importance of the session's main theme "Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region", and expressed his hope that discussions would result in new ideas to benefit member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

98. Mr. Al Dardari spoke on behalf of ESCWA. He emphasized the importance of the twenty-ninth ESCWA session in determining the region's approach over the coming period, especially in adapting the 2030 Agenda at the national level. He noted member States' cooperation in implementing the resolutions issued at the twenty-eighth ESCWA session, especially the Tunis Declaration.

##### 2. *Ministerial segment*

99. Mr. Abdullah bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa opened the ministerial segment in his capacity as the representative of Bahrain that had chaired the twenty-eighth session. He said that the current session's theme highlighted the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Arab countries. The significant challenges facing the Arab region had economic repercussions that affected most Arab countries with regard to rising youth unemployment and poverty, food security, the absence of healthy environments, the over-exploitation of natural resources, population increases, and a weak knowledge economy and innovation. He called for a review of development policies based on comprehensive studies and inclusive visions that met the needs of all social groups and ensured their participation in decision-making processes. He stressed the important role of ESCWA in stimulating economic and social development in Arab countries, promoting cooperation between them, and exchanging information and expertise to achieve sustainable development.

100. Mr. Al Dardari read a message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in which he called for special attention to be given to the most vulnerable groups as part of steps towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. He said that there were many vulnerable groups in the Arab region, including refugees and displaced persons as a result of conflict in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, among others, and the Palestinian people suffering under military occupation and striving to attain their rights. He added that prosperity could not be achieved without justice, respect for all human rights and peace. The Arab region, in particular, was sending a message to the world setting out its capacity for cooperation, inclusiveness and tolerance. He highlighted the role of ESCWA in providing varied advisory services and technical support to member States, enabling them to effectively achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

101. Mr. Sultan Al Muraikhi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, the country chairing the twenty-ninth session, gave a speech in which he highlighted the significant challenges facing the region, including war, occupation, conflict, forced displacement, refugees, and economic and political fluctuations. He said that the Sustainable Development Goals could not be achieved without international partnerships to create an enabling international and regional environment, taking into account disparities in countries' capacity and development levels, and without the necessary resources and innovation.

102. Ms. Rima Khalaf, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCWA, stressed that ending conflicts and civil wars must be a top priority for the region. She said that it was not possible to separate between development and politics. There was no hope for the Palestinian people in achieving the 2030 Agenda under occupation. The definition of justice was freedom, and occupation was its antithesis. Achieving sustainable development in the Arab region required a comprehensive shift in the development approach, building on its numerous accomplishments. She added that the 2030 Agenda was an integrated plan that was not open to fragmentation. Its sixteenth Goal on security, peace and good governance was fundamental to achieving the other Goals. There could be no development without the involvement of all. She emphasized the role of women as partners with full rights, and the need to enshrine that role in government policies.

#### D. PARTICIPANTS

103. The session was attended by representatives of 15 ESCWA member States. It was also attended by Algeria, Niger and Switzerland as observers. Other observers included representatives of United Nations programmes, agencies and institutions; international and non-governmental organizations; other organizations; and a number of experts. The list of participants is set out in annex I to the present report.

#### E. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

104. Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission provides that member countries shall assume the Chair of the sessions of the Commission on a rotating basis, in Arabic alphabetical order. It also provides that the Commission shall, at the beginning of each session, elect from among the representatives of its members two Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur, who shall remain in office until such time as their successors shall be elected, and shall be eligible for re-election.

105. Accordingly, Tunisia was next in line to chair the session. However, following consultations with Tunisia, members of the Bureau proposed that Qatar chair the twenty-ninth ESCWA session, with Tunisia chairing the next session. Representatives approved the proposal. Mr. Ahmad Hasan Al Hamadi, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, assumed the Chair of the senior officials segment. The representative of Tunis, Mr. Sami Bougacha, General Director of Multilateral Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia; and the representative of Bahrain, Mr. Toufic Ahmad Almansour, Director of the International Organization Department at the Foreign Ministry, assumed the posts of Vice Chairs. Mr. Omar Mustafa, Ministry of Trade of the Sudan, assumed the post of Rapporteur.

#### F. CREDENTIALS

106. In accordance with Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, the credentials of the representatives of member countries participating in the twenty-ninth session were submitted to the Executive Secretary.

#### G. AGENDA

107. At its first meeting, the Commission adopted the agenda as presented in document E/ESCWA/29/L.1. The agenda was adopted as follows:

1. Opening of the twenty-ninth session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of ESCWA to participate as observers in the twenty-ninth session of the Commission.
5. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission:
  - (a) Implementation of the Tunis Declaration and other resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-eighth session;
  - (b) Reports of the Executive Committee on its meetings;
  - (c) Reports of the ESCWA subsidiary bodies on their sessions;
  - (d) Programme performance in the biennium 2014-2015;
  - (e) Technical cooperation and regional advisory services;
  - (f) Financial status of the Commission.
6. Management issues:
  - (a) Evaluation of the work of the Commission;
  - (b) Proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017.
7. Revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019.
8. Outcomes of the 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development.
9. Justice for the Palestinian people - Fifty years of Israeli occupation:
  - (a) The question of apartheid;
  - (b) Premises and approach for calculating the cumulative cost of the occupation;
  - (c) Communication strategy to support the Palestinian people.
10. Achieving social justice in the Arab region: from concept and vision to policy and practice.
11. Gender mainstreaming in public institutions.

12. Opening of the ministerial segment.
  13. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab States (main theme of the session):
    - (a) Round-table discussion 1: Challenges facing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level;
    - (b) Round-table discussion 2: The impact of conflict and occupation on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;
    - (c) Round-table discussion 3: Supporting member States in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: methods and tools.
  14. Date and venue of the thirtieth session of the Commission.
  15. Other matters.
  16. Adoption of a ministerial declaration on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab States and other resolutions.
  17. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its twenty-ninth session.
108. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the proposed organization of work for its twenty-ninth session, presented in document E/ESCWA/29/L.2.

#### H. DATE AND VENUE OF THE THIRTIETH SESSION (Agenda item 14)

109. The thirtieth session of the Commission will be held in Beirut in May 2018, if no other member State proposes to host it.

#### I. OTHER MATTERS (Agenda item 15)

110. The representative of Yemen proposed considering the circumstances of conflict-affected countries under this item. However, given that the issue had been discussed at length at the ministerial segment, it was not revisited under this item.

Annex I

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

A. ESCWA MEMBER COUNTRIES

Bahrain

Mr. Abdullah bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa  
Deputy  
Ministry of Foreign and International Affairs

Mr. Toufic Ahmad Almansour  
Director  
International Organization

Mr. Fuad Sadiq Al Baharna  
Counsellor  
Head of Department of Islamic Cooperation  
Organization and Other Regional Organizations  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Jabber Ahmad Attieh  
Diplomatic Attache  
Embassy of Bahrain in Qatar

Egypt

Mr. Ihab Abdelhamid Hasan  
Charge D'affaires  
Embassy of Egypt in Qatar

Mr. Kamel Mohamed Elabaseery  
First Secretary  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Department of Multilateral Economic Relations  
Department

Ms. Marwa Moujib Abdel Moneem Masaad  
Third Secretary  
Embassy of Egypt in Qatar

Iraq

Mr. Salman Al Jumaili  
Minister  
Ministry of Planning

Mr. Khaled Karim Mosleh  
Minister Office  
Ministry of Planning

Ms. Raghadabdul Rasool  
General Director  
Directory of Human Development

Ms. Najla Ali Murad  
General Director  
Executive management of the Poverty Reduction  
Strategy

Mr. Abdulkareem Abdalla Shalal Al Janabi  
Deputy  
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Mr. Ahmad Hussein Abboud  
Embassy of Iraq in Qatar

Jordan

Mr. Imad Fakhoury  
Minister  
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Ms. Hazar Ibrahim Badran  
Head of World Bank and United Nations Agencies  
Division  
International Cooperation Department  
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Kuwait

Mr. Khaled Abdel Saheb Mahdi  
Secretary General  
General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for  
Planning and Development

Mr. Meshal M. Al-Ardhi  
Controller International Organizations  
International Economic Cooperation Department  
Ministry of Finance

Ms. Rabab Hussein Merza  
Head of the International Cooperation Department  
General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for  
Planning and Development

Ms. Aicha Moubarak Alajmi  
Economy Analyst

Mauritania

Mr. Almokhtar Wld Ajay  
Minister  
Ministry of Economy and Finance

Mr. Mohamed Tekreh  
Director of Strategies and Studies  
Ministry of Economy and Finance

Morocco

Mr. Nabil Zniber  
Ambassador  
Embassy of Morocco in Qatar

Ms. Hanan Altawazni  
In-Charge of Studies to Prime Minister  
Ministry of Public Affairs and Governance

Mr. Abderrazak Dinar  
Deputy Head of Mission  
Embassy of Morocco in Qatar

Oman

Mr. Said Ben Rached Ben Said Al Qatbi  
Director General of Social sectors  
The Supreme Council for Planning

Ms. Suad Bint Mohammed Bin Youssef Al-Fadhel  
Director of Technical Cooperation Department  
The Supreme Council for Planning

Mr. Mohamed Ben Saif Ben Salim Alkalbani  
Director  
Department of Environment and Sustainable  
Development  
Ministry of Environment and Foreign Affairs

State of Palestine

Mr. Bashar Jouma  
President Prime Minister's Office  
Minister for Sustainable Development

Mr. Mahmoud Ataya  
Acting General Director, Social Development  
Directorate  
Policy and Reform Unit  
Prime Minister's Office

Qatar

Mr. Mohamed Ben Abdelrahman Al Thany  
State Minister  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Tarek Alansari  
Director of Department of International  
Cooperation

Mr. Ahmad Hasan Al Hamadi  
Secretary General  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Naji Abderabbo Al-Aji  
Director of Private Associations and Institutions  
Department  
Ministry of Administrative Development and  
Labour and Social Affairs

Ms. Hind Alkhater  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Ahmad Hussein  
Statistics Expert  
Minister's Office  
The Ministry of Development Planning and  
Statistics

Mr. Ossama Othman Alfaki  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Mohamed Saaed  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Abdulfatah Said Mohamed  
Counselor for Minister of State  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Fahad bin Sulaiman Altekhaifi  
President of General Authority for Statistics

Mr. Abdel Baset Bin Salem Sairafi  
Deputy President for Meteorology and  
Environmental Protection Environment and  
Development Affairs

Mr. Abdullah Ben Ali AlMarwani  
Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy and  
Planning Assistant for Economic Affairs  
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Saudi Arabia (continued)

Mr. Sami Abdulaziz Azzebin  
Director General of the Arab and Islamic Trade  
Relations  
Ministry of Trade and Investment

Ms. Hadil Bent Mohamed Al Sultan  
Director of Development and Environmental  
Management  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Abdalla Ben Ghazi Alotaibi  
Agency for International Labour Affairs  
Ministry of Labour and Social Development

Mr. Saneeh Abdella Al Ahmary  
Planning Expert  
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Malek Ben Ali Ben Ahmad  
Planning Researcher  
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Hani Ben Msaïd Al Hazmi  
Researcher Planning  
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Majed Darwish Elharthy  
Economic Researcher  
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Sudan

Ms. Mashaer Ahmad Alamine Abdalla  
Minister  
Ministry of Welfare and Social Security

Mr. Ali Mohamed Keir  
Deputy Ministry of Welfare and Social Security

Ms. Limia Abdelghaffar Khalaf Alla  
Secretary General  
National Population Council

Ms. Akhlas Mohamed Ali Mohamed  
Ministry of International Cooperation

Mr. Abdalla Frag Alla Arahmat Alla Hamdin  
Director  
Ministry of Trade

Mr. Omar Mustafa  
Ministry of Trade

Mr. Mohamed Saïed Ahmad Mohamed  
First Secretary  
Embassy of Sudan in Qatar

Ms. Hana'a Hamdalla

Tunisia

Mr. Sabri Elbassetbgi  
Secretary of State to the Foreign Ministry

Ms. Hala Bachetgi  
General Manager  
Public administration organizations and  
international seminars

Mr. Sami Bougacha  
General Director of Multilateral Cooperation  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Rachid Saidani  
Minister  
Deputy Ambassador  
Embassy of Tunisia in Qatar

United Arab Emirates

Mr. Mohammed Al Shehhi  
Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy

Mr. Saleh El Amri  
Ambassador  
Embassy of United Arab Emirates in Qatar

Mr. Nizar Faysal El-Meshaal  
Director  
Department of Economic Agreements and Joint  
Committees  
Ministry of Economy

Ms. Sumiah Eljanahi  
Office of Undersecretary of the Ministry of  
Economy

Ms. Hanan Abdalla Al Kadi  
Department of Economic Agreements and Joint  
Committees  
Ministry of Economy

Yemen

Mr. Mohamed Said Al Saidi  
Minister  
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Mr. Mohammed Ahmed Al-Hawri  
Deputy Ministry of Planning and International  
Cooperation

Mr. Samir Abd Alrazzak Ahmad  
Director General of Planning in Aden

B. STATES MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS NOT MEMBERS OF ESCWA

Algeria

Mr. Ahmed Bouziane  
Ambassador  
Embassy of Algeria in Lebanon

Mr. Michael Gerber  
Ambassador  
Special Envoy for Global Sustainable  
Development  
Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

Niger

H.E. Mr. Hasan Moubarak  
Ambassador  
Embassy of Republic of Niger in Qatar

Mr. Niklaus Eggenberger  
Regional Advisor for Development Cooperation  
and Humanitarian Aid  
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation  
(SDC)  
United Arab Emirates

Switzerland

Mr. Etienne Andre Thévoz  
Ambassador  
Embassy of Switzerland in Qatar

C. UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT

Regional Commissions New York Office  
(RCNYO)

Mr. Amro Nour  
Director

Office of the Special Envoy for Syria

Mr. Ramzi Ezzediine Ramzi  
Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General  
United Nations for Syria  
Switzerland

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the  
Empowerment of Women (UN-WOMEN)

Ms. Blerta Aliko  
Deputy Regional Director for the Arab States  
Egypt

Mr. Moritz Meier-Ewert  
Special Assistant  
Switzerland

Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator  
for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO)

Ms. Subhra Bhattacharjee  
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist  
Jerusalem

United Nations Office for Project Services  
(UNOPS)

Ms. Bana Kaloti  
Regional Director Middle East  
Jordan

Mr. Muhammad Usman Akram  
Head of Programme  
Regional Office, Operational Hub  
Erbil



D. UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES AND AGENCIES

United Nations Development Programme  
(UNDP)

Mr. Khaled Abdel Shafi  
Director Regional Hub  
Regional Bureau for Arab States

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Mr. Abdelsalam Sidahmed  
Regional Representative

United Nations Population Fund  
(UNFPA)

Mr. Luay Shabaneh  
Regional Director  
Arab States Regional Office (ASRO)  
New York

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and  
AIDS (UNAIDS)

Ms. Yamina Chakkar  
Regional Director for MENA

Mr. Eltayeb Elamin  
Strategic Intervention Advisor  
Egypt

United Nations Human Settlements Programme  
(UN-Habitat)

Mr. Tarek A. El-Sheikh  
Regional Representative  
Jordan

E. UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

United Nations Industrial Development  
Organization (UNIDO)

Ms. Giovanna Ceglie  
Representative and Director of the Regional Office  
Egypt

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United  
Nations (FAO)

Mr. Nabil Gangi  
Deputy Regional Representative for the Near East  
and North Africa  
Egypt

Mr. Mohamed Barre  
Regional Statistician

Mr. Mohamad Moubarak

World Health Organization (WHO)

Ms. Rayana Bou Haka  
Manager Country Focus and Support  
Regional Office for Middle East  
Egypt

International Organization for Migration  
(IOM)

Ms. Karoline Popp  
Regional Liaison and Policy Officer  
Germany

Mr. Hassan Abdel Moneim Mostafa  
Senior Regional Adviser for North Africa, the  
Middle East  
Switzerland

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction  
(UNISDR)

Ms. Luna Abuswaireh  
Head of Regional Office for Arab States

F. INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND RELATED BODIES

League of Arab States (LAS)

Ms. Nada Al-Agizy  
Director of Sustainable Development and  
International Cooperation  
Egypt

Council of Arab Economic Unity

Mr. Mohamed Mohamed Al Rabea  
General Secretarist  
Egypt

Mr Barakat. Al Farra  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees  
Egypt

Mr. El Sayed Abd El-Fattah  
Consultant of CAUE  
Egyt

Mr. Mohamed Abdalla Attieh  
President of the Arab Union for e-commerce  
Qatar

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) - Secretariat

Mr. Abdalla Al Shebli  
Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and  
Development Affairs  
Saudi Arabia

Mr. Jamal M. Al-Khamees  
Head of Planning and Economic Knowledge  
Section  
Commerce and Industry Department

Council of Ministers of Labour and Council  
of Ministers of Social Affairs in GCC States

Ms. Zeinab Hasan Khalifa Saleh  
Assistant Social Researcher  
Social Affairs Department  
Bahrain

Arab Industrial Development and Mining  
Organization (AIDMO)

Mr. Ayad Jalloul  
Head of Private Sector  
Morocco

Federation of GCC Chambers (FGCCC)

Mr. Abdul Rahim Hassan Naqi  
Secretary General  
Saudi Arabia

International Center for Agricultural Research in  
the dry Areas (ICARDA)

Mr. Mohamed Ben Saeah  
Date Palm Project Regional Coordinator in the  
GCC Countries  
Oman

Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural  
Organization (ISESCO)

Mr. Ali Rahhal  
Program Specialist  
United Arab Emirates

International Organization for Corporate Social  
Responsibility (IOCSR)

Mr. Yacoub M. Bani Hotheil  
Chairman  
Qatar

General Union of Chamber of Commerce Industry  
and Agriculture for Arab Countries  
(GUCCIAAC)

Mr. Shaheen Ali Shaheen  
Assistant Secretary General  
Lebanon

Ms. Hoda Taher Kachtan  
Director of Arab and Joint Chambers Affairs  
Lebanon

International Chamber of Commerce - Qatar  
(ICC-Qatar)

Ms. Tamader Al Thani  
IR and Communications Executive

International Chamber of Commerce - Paris  
(ICC-Paris)

Ms. Nicole Graugnard  
Senior Policy Manager

G. GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Qatar Charity

Mr. Ayman Jardan  
Project Expert

Mr. Mohamed Aderdour

Qatar Social Work Foundation

Ms. Sara Ghanem Alkawari  
Specialist International Relations

Education Above All

Ms. Lina Alderham

Ms. Lina Alderham  
Educational Specialist

Afif Charity

Mr. Mohamed Abdalla Naser

Foundation Sheikh Thani Ibn Abdullah for  
Humanitarian Services

Mr. Abed Alkahtani  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees  
General Director  
Mr. Ali Ben Yousef Alkuwari  
Director of Media and Communication Division  
Qatar

The Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting  
(GOIC)

Mr. Ali Hamed Al-Mulla  
Assistant Secretary General  
Industrial Project Sector

Ms. Laila Shrair  
Strategies Planning Advisor  
Secretary General Office  
Qatar

Mr. Mohamed Jassim Al Ansari  
Acting Director of Industrial Information  
Industrial Market Intelligence  
Qatar

Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultation

Mr. Mohsen Mohamed Saleh  
General Manager  
Lebanon

Saudi Fund for Development (SFD)

Mr. Fahed Abdalla Albassam  
Saudi Arabia

Mr. Abdulaziz Ibrahim Aljumah  
Accountant  
Treasury Department  
Saudi Arabia

I. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Cairo University

Mr. Mustafa Kamel  
Professor  
Egypt

Annex II

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

Title	Item	Symbol
Agenda and annotations	3	E/ESCWA/29/1
Organization of work	3	E/ESCWA/29/2
Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of ESCWA to participate as observers in the twenty-ninth session of the Commission	4	E/ESCWA/29/3
Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission	5	E/ESCWA/29/4
Implementation of the Tunis Declaration and other resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-eighth session	5 (a)	E/ESCWA/29/4(Part I)
Reports of the Executive Committee on its meetings	5 (b)	E/ESCWA/29/4(Part II)
Reports of the ESCWA subsidiary bodies on their sessions	5 (c)	E/ESCWA/29/4(Part III)
Programme performance in the biennium 2014-2015	5 (d)	E/ESCWA/29/4(Part IV)
Technical cooperation and regional advisory services	5 (e)	E/ESCWA/29/4(Part V)
Financial status of the Commission	5 (f)	E/ESCWA/29/4(Part VI)
Management issues	6	E/ESCWA/29/5
Evaluation of the work of the Commission	6 (a)	E/ESCWA/29/5(Part I)
Proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017	6 (b)	E/ESCWA/29/5(Part II)
Revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019	7	E/ESCWA/29/6
Outcomes 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development	8	E/ESCWA/29/7
Justice for the Palestinian people - Fifty years of Israeli occupation	9	E/ESCWA/29/8
The question of apartheid	9 (a)	E/ESCWA/29/8(Part I)

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Title	Item	Symbol
Premises and approach for calculating the cumulative cost of the occupation;	9 (b)	E/ESCWA/29/8(Part II)
Communication strategy to support the Palestinian people	9 (c)	E/ESCWA/29/8(Part III)
Achieving social justice in the Arab region: from concept and vision to policy and practice.	10	E/ESCWA/29/9
Gender mainstreaming in public institutions	11	E/ESCWA/29/10
Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab States	13	E/ESCWA/29/11
Implementation challenges at the national level	13 (a)	E/ESCWA/29/11/WP.1
Impact of conflict and occupation	13 (b)	E/ESCWA/29/11/WP.2
Methods and tools to support member States	13 (c)	E/ESCWA/29/11/WP.3
Information for participants		E/ESCWA/29/INF.1
List of documents		E/ESCWA/29/INF.2

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