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Regional cooperation

Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Economic Commission for Africa and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Summary

The present addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields contains information on the resolutions and decisions adopted or endorsed by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia at its sixth special session, held in Amman on 21 and 22 December 2019, the Economic Commission for Africa at the extraordinary meeting of the Bureau of the Commission, held virtually on 9 April 2020, and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its seventy-sixth session, held virtually on 21 May 2020. The full texts of the resolutions and decisions are available at www.regionalcommissions.org/our-work/regional-commissions-sessions-resolutions-and-decisions.



I. Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

1. At its sixth special session, held in Amman on 21 and 22 December 2019, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia adopted resolution 336 (S-VI), on the basis of which the following draft resolution is submitted for action by the Economic and Social Council:

Draft resolution

Admission of Algeria and Somalia to membership in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Council,

Taking note of Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolution 336 (S-VI) of 21 December 2019, adopted by the Commission at its sixth special session, held in Amman on 21 and 22 December 2019, and annexed to the present resolution,

Approves the admission of Algeria and Somalia to membership in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

Annex

Resolution 336 (S-VI)

Requests by Algeria and Somalia for membership of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Taking note of the communication dated 14 September 2019 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Somalia addressed to the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, in which Somalia requests to join the Commission as a full member,

Taking note also of the communication dated 21 October 2019 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria addressed to the secretariat of the Commission, in which Algeria requested to join the Commission as a full member,

Recalling the admission of the Sudan to the Commission in 2008 pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/8 of 22 July 2008, the accession of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia pursuant to Council resolution 2012/1 of 10 July 2012, and the admission of Mauritania pursuant to Council resolution 2015/32 of 22 July 2015,

Recalling also its resolution 302 (XXVII) of 10 May 2012, in which it invited all Arab countries to join the Commission,

1. *Welcomes* the requests by Algeria and Somalia to join the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia;
2. *Recommends* that the Economic and Social Council accept the two requests;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary of the Commission to follow up on the implementation of the present resolution.

II. Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

A. Economic Commission for Africa

2. On 17 March 2020, the Bureau of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) agreed to hold an extraordinary meeting of the Bureau at the ministerial level, with the participation of the ministers of the member States appointed to the Bureau, in order to meet the statutory requirements of the secretariat following the postponement of the fifty-third session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development as a consequence of the outbreak of the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

3. Accordingly, the extraordinary meeting of the Bureau of the fifty-second session of the Conference was convened by the secretariat of ECA on 9 April 2020. It adopted two resolutions, one relating to the ECA programme plan and budget for 2021 and the other to COVID-19, summaries of which are set out below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

Resolution 970 (LIII) Programme plan and budget for 2021

4. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development adopted the Commission's programme plan and budget for 2021. It requested the Executive Secretary of the Commission to continue to support the efforts of the Commission in securing the additional resources needed to conduct critical evidence-based analyses of the socioeconomic consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic as a basis for assisting the region in adopting the strategies and measures necessary to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on the development prospects of African countries. It also requested the Commission, in collaboration with the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, to design e-learning and tailor-made training and capacity development programmes for member States in response to their requests; to organize and coordinate meetings under the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to report on the status of implementation of the Framework. Finally, it requested the Commission to support member States, the regional economic communities and the African Union Commission in operationalizing the digital transformation strategy for Africa, through the building of inclusive digital skills and human capacity across the digital sciences, the judiciary and the education sector.

Resolution 971 (LIII) Coronavirus disease

5. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, called for action to address the human crisis resulting from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19); stimulate the economy and mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic; provide liquidity to the private sector; support international trade and the unimpeded movement of essential medical supplies and food; and support Governments in their recovery efforts.

6. The Conference of Ministers also requested the Executive Secretary of the Commission to continue to work with African ministers of finance, planning and economic development, together with other partners, to address the concerns of African countries regarding the impact of COVID-19 on their societies and economies.

B. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

7. At its seventy-sixth session, held virtually on 21 May 2020, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific adopted two resolutions, summaries of which are set out below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

Resolution 76/1

Strengthening cooperation to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific

8. The Commission encouraged member States to strengthen regional economic, social and environmental cooperation on the oceans, seas and marine resources in Asia and the Pacific for the benefit of the sustainable development of all member States and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, including by enhancing the capacity of the member States to protect the marine environment and resources and to ensure economic development in an environmentally sound and inclusive manner; encouraging the implementation of policies to reduce marine pollution from various sources, in particular marine plastic, aiming to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050; promoting North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation for capacity-building and information-sharing and public-private and civil society partnerships to increase economic benefits to small island developing States and the least developed countries from the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources; promoting partnerships and developing innovative approaches on disaster risk reduction and post-disaster recovery, and sharing information and expertise for building resilience and multi-hazard early warning systems; and strengthening cooperation and policy coherence among institutions at all levels, including between and among international, regional and subregional organizations.

9. It also requested the Executive Secretary to continue to strengthen partnerships for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources; strengthen and facilitate national capacities and provide, upon request, and within existing resources, technical assistance for the effective implementation of relevant internationally agreed conventions to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources; support countries, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as developing middle-income countries, in sharing experiences as well as in enhancing cooperation on the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources; strengthen and facilitate national capacities for measurement and accounting of progress towards the sustainable development of the oceans; and support systematic regional dialogue on sustainable maritime connectivity, in close collaboration with the key global and regional stakeholders and as part of the work of the Commission on promoting sustainable transport connectivity in the region.

Resolution 76/2

Regional cooperation to address the socioeconomic effects of pandemics and crises in Asia and the Pacific

10. The Commission reaffirmed the importance of international and regional cooperation to strengthen the resilience of all member States with regard to the socioeconomic effects of pandemics and other related crises. It acknowledged the importance of ensuring the continued flow of essential goods and services and the movement of people in order to face the challenges of the adverse effects of the pandemic. It encouraged countries to highlight the inequality gaps, poverty and escalating health risks for millions of people as a result of the coronavirus disease

(COVID-19) pandemic, and emphasized that recovery from the COVID-19 crisis provided an opportunity to build back better in Asia and the Pacific, including by building more equal, inclusive and sustainable institutions, economies and societies that respected human rights and were more resilient in the face of any future pandemic, and other related crises faced by the region, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Commission reaffirmed the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development and, reiterating the importance of multilateralism and international cooperation, encouraged action by all member States of the Commission to promote measures that might reinforce global solidarity in responding to the outbreak of COVID-19.

11. In addition, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to analyse the ability of the Asia-Pacific region to recover from COVID-19 and other pandemics and similar wide-scale crises, and to develop ideas for concrete and coordinated actions by countries, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders, including proposals for responding to the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 and future pandemics and related wide-scale crises in the region, keeping in mind the experience and best practices of the initial response, in order to enable countries to build back better in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
