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, Jordan on 21 and 22 December 2019, the Economic Commission for Africa at the extraordinary meeting of the Bureau of its Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 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.
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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, Jordan 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 as member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting resolution 336 (S-VI) of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia at its sixth special session (see annex),

Approves the admission of Algeria and Somalia as members of 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,

Noting the communication from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Somalia of 14 September 2019 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,

Noting also the communication from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria of 21 October 2019 addressed to the secretariat, in which Algeria requests 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 Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/1 of 10 July 2012, and the admission of Mauritania pursuant to Economic and Social Council Resolution 2015/32 of 22 July 2015,

Recalling also its resolution 302 (XXVII) of 10 May 2012 which invites 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 to follow up on the implementation of the present resolution.

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

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 as a consequence of the outbreak of the global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

3. Accordingly, the extraordinary meeting of the Bureau of the Economic Commission for Africa of the fifty-second session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development was convened by the secretariat of ECA on 9 April 2020. It adopted two resolutions relating to ECA 2021 programme plan and budget, and on Coronavirus disease 2019, summaries of which are set out below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

Resolution 970 (LIII): 2021 programme plan and budget

4. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, adopted the 2021 programme plan and budget of the Economic Commission for Africa. It requested the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa 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 COVID-19 pandemic as a basis for assisting the region to adopt the strategies and measures necessary to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on the development prospects of African countries. It also requested the Economic Commission for Africa, 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 2019

5. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, called for action to: address the human crisis due to the Coronavirus disease 2019; 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. It also requested the Executive Secretary 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.

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 ESCAP/RES/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

9. 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 of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the
attainment of the Goals including by: enhancing the capacity of member States for
the protection of the marine environment and resources and for 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.

10. 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 ESCAP/RES/76/2

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

11. The Commission reaffirmed the importance of international and regional cooperation to strengthen the resilience of all members 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 due to COVID-19, and emphasized that recovery from the COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity to build back better in Asia and the Pacific, including by building more equal, inclusive and sustainable institutions, economies and societies that respect human rights and are 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 members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to promote measures that may reinforce global solidarity in responding to the outbreak of COVID-19.

12. 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, to enable countries to build back better in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.