

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA**

**REPORT OF THE FIFTH SPECIAL SESSION
8 June 2015**

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

OFFICIAL RECORDS: 2015

SUPPLEMENT No. 21



United Nations

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Summary

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its fifth special session concurrently with the first meeting of the Executive Committee in Amman, on 8 June 2015. The special session considered the request of Mauritania for membership of the Commission.

The present report contains an overview of the special session and the text of the resulting resolution.

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Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its fifth special session concurrently with the first meeting of the Executive Committee in Amman, on 8 June 2015, to consider the request of Mauritania for membership of the Commission. A resolution was issued in that regard, which will be presented to the Economic and Social Council for consideration.

I. RESOLUTION 322 (S-V) ON THE REQUEST OF MAURITANIA FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Noting the communication of 30 April 2015 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania to the secretariat of the Commission, in which she expressed the desire of Mauritania to accede to the Commission,

Noting also the accession of the Sudan to the Commission in 2008, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/8 of 22 July 2008, and the accession of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/1 of 10 July 2012,

Recalling its resolution 302 (XXVII) of 10 May 2012 inviting all Arab countries to become members of the Commission,

1. *Welcomes* the request of Mauritania for membership of the Commission;
2. *Recommends* that the Economic and Social Council approve the request of Mauritania;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary of the Commission to follow up on the implementation of the present resolution.

II. TOPIC OF DISCUSSION

Consideration of the request of Mauritania for membership of the Commission

2. Under this item, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/S-5/1 on the request of Mauritania for membership of the Commission. He said that the secretariat had received a handwritten communication from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania, dated 30 April 2015, requesting approval for Mauritania to accede to ESCWA as a full member State. The Minister had affirmed the desire of Mauritania to strengthen cooperation with ESCWA and its member States and to participate in the Commission and benefit from its expertise. The secretariat had informed ESCWA member States of the request in an official communication dated 18 May 2015.

3. The representative of the secretariat noted that, since the establishment of ESCWA in 1973, several Arab countries had acceded to it. Total membership had reached 17 countries, following the accession of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/1.

4. ESCWA resolution 302 (XXVII), adopted at the twenty-seventh ESCWA session, invited all Arab countries to become members of ESCWA, which reflected member States' endeavours to strengthen interregional cooperation and collaboration with ESCWA, so as to harmonize its programmes and objectives with the Arab region's priorities and broaden regional economic and social integration.

5. The representative of the secretariat presented a draft resolution on the request of Mauritania for membership of the Commission for consideration by participants.

6. The representatives commended the draft resolution and reaffirmed the importance of expanding ESCWA membership. The representative of the United Arab Emirates welcomed the membership of Mauritania, as did the representative of Egypt who affirmed the need to complete the ESCWA Arab identity through the accession of the remaining Arab countries. The representative of Saudi Arabia also supported the membership of Mauritania. The representative of the State of Palestine stressed the importance of Arab unity and welcomed the membership of Mauritania. The representatives of Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen also expressed their support for the membership of Mauritania. The representatives of Oman and the Sudan stressed the importance of other Arab countries acceding to ESCWA.

7. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic requested clarification on a recommendation by the Technical Committee, issued at its seventh (18-19 March 2013) and eighth (10-12 December 2013) meetings, on limiting ESCWA membership to members of the League of Arab States. In response, the secretariat said that the recommendation had been issued by members of the Technical Committee and stated that Arab countries wishing to gain membership of ESCWA in the future should be members of the League of Arab States.

8. Given that no other issues were raised regarding the draft resolution in its presented form, it was adopted and will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council for consideration.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. VENUE AND DATE OF THE SESSION

9. The fifth ESCWA special session was held in Amman, on 8 June 2015.

B. OPENING

10. The Chair of the special session, Mr. Fuad Sadiq Albaharna, representative of Bahrain, gave an opening speech in which he underlined the aim of holding the special session. He said that the secretariat would elaborate on the procedural details.

11. The representative of the secretariat said that the aim of the special session was to consider the request of Mauritania for membership of the Commission. The desire of representatives to ensure the accession of all Arab countries to ESCWA reflected the political consensus of members as enshrined in the resolutions of the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth ESCWA sessions and in the recommendations of the seventh and eighth meetings of the Technical Committee.

12. He said that the invitation to hold the current special session was formulated in accordance with the ESCWA Rules of Procedure that allow for the convening of ESCWA sessions, as necessary, following consultations between the Chair and the secretariat and communications with relevant United Nations bodies. As a result, the fifth special session was held in line with the established rules, concurrently with the first meeting of the Executive Committee.

C. PARTICIPANTS

13. Representatives from the following ESCWA member States attended the fifth ESCWA special session: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, State of Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Lebanon and Libya were not represented. The annex to the present report contains the list of participants.

D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

14. ESCWA adopted the practice applied at special sessions, which provides that members of the Bureau of the previous regular session shall assume the same tasks at the special session. Consequently, Mr. Fuad Sadiq Albaharna, representative of Bahrain and Chair of the twenty-eighth ESCWA session, chaired the fifth ESCWA special session. Mr. Mohammed Ahmed Bin Abdul Aziz Al Shehhi, representative of the United Arab Emirates, and Mr. Fathi bin Muawiyah, representative of Tunisia, assumed the positions of vice-chairs, and Mr. Mohammed al-Moataz ser al-Khatem Ismail Mahmud, representative of the Sudan, the position of Rapporteur.

E. AGENDA

15. The fifth ESCWA special session was held to consider an item on the request of Mauritania for membership of the Commission.

Annex

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ESCWA MEMBER COUNTRIES

Bahrain

Mr. Fuad Sadiq Albaharna
Head of the OIC and Regional Organizations and
Blocs Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Kamil Abdullah al-Ramadan
Third Secretary
International Organization Directorate
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Egypt

Mr. Majdi Radi
Assistant to the Minister
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Iraq

Ms. Azhar Hussein Saleh al-Rabiei
Director-General of the General Governmental
Contracts Department
Ministry of Planning

Ms. Marwa Ali Hamad
Ministry of Planning

Jordan

Mr. Ziad Obeidat
Director of the Development Plans and Programs
Department
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Ms. Hazar Badran
Head of the World Bank Group and United
Nations Relations Section
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Ms. Raghed al-Shakhaniba
Senior Researcher at the of World Bank Group and
United Nations Relations Section
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Kuwait

Ms. Chourouk al-Khalil
Senior Researcher in International Relations
Ministry of Finance

Ms. Mounira al-Khalifi
Researcher in Foreign Relations
Ministry of Finance

Morocco

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Minister plenipotentiary
Embassy of Morocco
Amman, Jordan

Ms. Meryem al-Daou
Secretary for Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Oman

Mr. Hamad bin Jaber bin Saoud al-Mahrouqi
Director General of Administrative and Financial
Affairs
Supreme Council for Planning

Ms. Suad Mohammed Bin Youssef al-Fadel
Director of the Technical Cooperation Department
Supreme Council for Planning

Palestine

Mr. Mahmoud Ataya
Acting Director General
General Directorate of Social Sector Planning
Ministry of Planning and Administrative
Development

Mr. Ahmed Abbas
Assistant undersecretary for development planning
Ministry of Planning and Administrative
Development

Qatar

Mr. Khaled bin Mohammed al-Baker
Director of the Department of International
Technical Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Oussama Othman El-Fekki Mohammed
Ahmad
Consultant for International Cooperation
Department of International Technical Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Nasser Saleh al-Abed al-Ghani
Researcher in International Affairs
Department of International Technical Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Mr. Abdullah Ali al-Marwani
Assistant Undersecretary for Planning
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Sudan

Mr. Mohammed al-Moataz ser al-Khatem Ismail
Mahmud
Assistant Undersecretary
Ministry of Trade

Mr. Taha Mohammed Ahmed
Assistant Director of the International
Organizations Division
Ministry of Trade

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Tunisia

Mr. Fathi bin Muawiyah
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Tunisian Embassy
Amman, Jordan

United Arab Emirates

Mr. Mohammed Ahmed Bin Abdul Aziz Al Shehhi
Undersecretary for economic affairs
Ministry of Economy

Mr. Nizar Faisal al- Meshaal
Director of the Department of Economic
Agreements and Joint Committees
Ministry of Economy

Ms. Sumaya al-Jinahi
Senior Administrative Assistant
Office of the Undersecretary for Economic Affairs
Ministry of Economy

Ms. Hanan Abdullah al-Kadi
Economic Researcher
Ministry of Economy

Yemen

Mr. Mohammed Ahmad El Haweri
Undersecretary
International Economic Studies and Forecasts
Sector
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation