



ANNUAL REPORT 2014



UNITED NATIONS

الاسواق
ESCWA

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Annual Report 2014



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Foreword



As the United Nations enters its seventieth year, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) embarks on its fifth decade of work in the Arab region.

Our role at ESCWA, however challenging in these tragic times, is to keep the long-term goals of development, integration and social justice alive, working towards a prosperous and just future for all.

The region has been shaken to the core. The casualty toll continues to mount as millions have been displaced and exiled. Aspirations for political and socioeconomic reform wither in the face of violence, hunger and displacement. Indeed, it is the very failure to fulfill these aspirations that sparked the Arab uprisings. There will be no lasting peace so long as the demands of Arab peoples go unanswered.

I remain convinced that our region will emerge as a beacon of hope and

tolerance. I believe you will find hope in the following pages, as I have done in our work throughout the region.

Hope in rebuilding: ESCWA has developed expertise in “day after tomorrow” development planning, readying reconstruction and development road maps for post-conflict States. From Syria to Palestine, Libya to Yemen, our work with struggling States will pave the way for rebirth.

Hope in coming together: ESCWA promotes regional integration for social development and economic growth. Ministers from the region saluted our landmark report on Arab integration and, at the twenty-eighth session of ESCWA, committed themselves to closer cooperation. Unity and shared prosperity must replace fragmentation and underdevelopment.

Above all, hope in greater justice. ESCWA secured political commitment to that goal in the form of the 2014 Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region.

We maintain unwavering support for the Palestinian people, highlighting the grievous socioeconomic impact of occupation. We must take a stand for justice, recognizing that violence corrupts the perpetrator as much as it hurts the victim.

The explorer Ibn Battuta once said: “Travel first leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller.” I have been awed to silence by the bravery, relentless effort and commitment to justice, freedom and dignity I have witnessed across our region. I would now like to share our story of hope and promise in the pages that follow.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rima Khalaf'.

Rima Khalaf
Under-Secretary-General
Executive Secretary

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1. ESCWA in Brief

The Economic Commission for Western Asia was established in 1973 pursuant to resolution 1818 (LV) of the United Nations Economic and Social Council to promote economic activity in its member States, strengthen cooperation between them and address regional development challenges. In 1985, the social component was added to the mandate of what then became the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). During its twenty-eighth session, held in September 2014 in Tunis, member States recommended renaming the Commission the Economic and Social Commission for Arab States.

Along with its sister regional commissions in Latin America (Santiago de Chile), Africa (Addis Ababa), the Asia-Pacific region (Bangkok) and Europe (Geneva), ESCWA is a regional arm of the Economic and Social Council, serving as an interface between the global and national arenas. In the face of growing development challenges, the

regional commissions are called upon to play an increasingly significant role by providing technical expertise and advisory services, and sharing best practices.

Since its establishment, ESCWA has been headquartered in three Arab capitals: Beirut, Baghdad and Amman. Its permanent headquarters are in Beirut. Its membership has grown steadily to reach 17 member States, stretching from Morocco in the west to Iraq in the east. Its current members are: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the State of Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The Arab region is vast, complex and diverse. It has undergone, and continues to witness, tremendous instability and transformations. The region is critical to the world economy and a geopolitical hotspot in terms of global security.

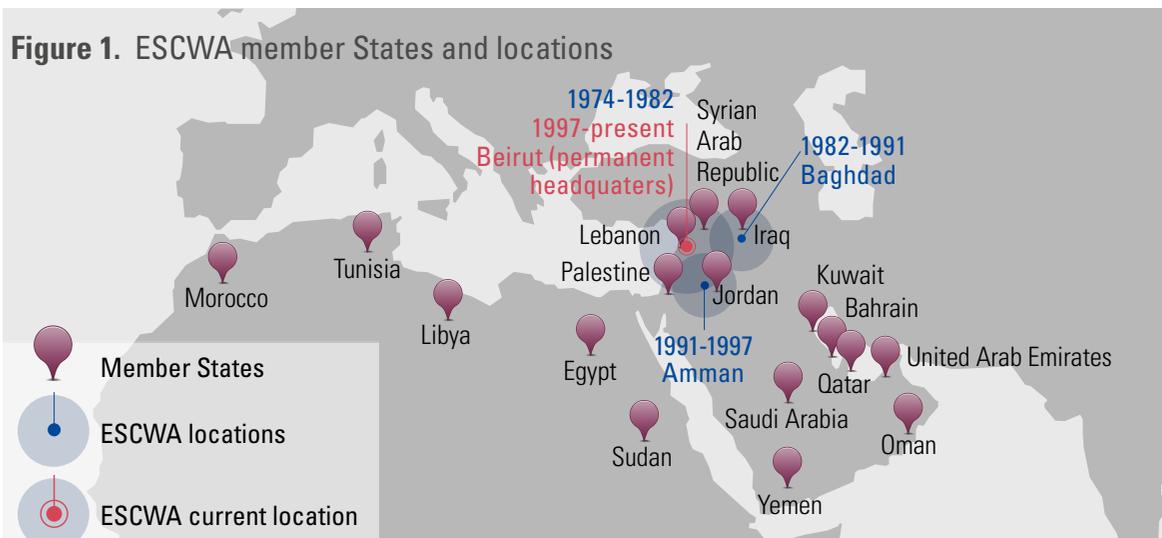


Figure 2. ESCWA and the United Nations system

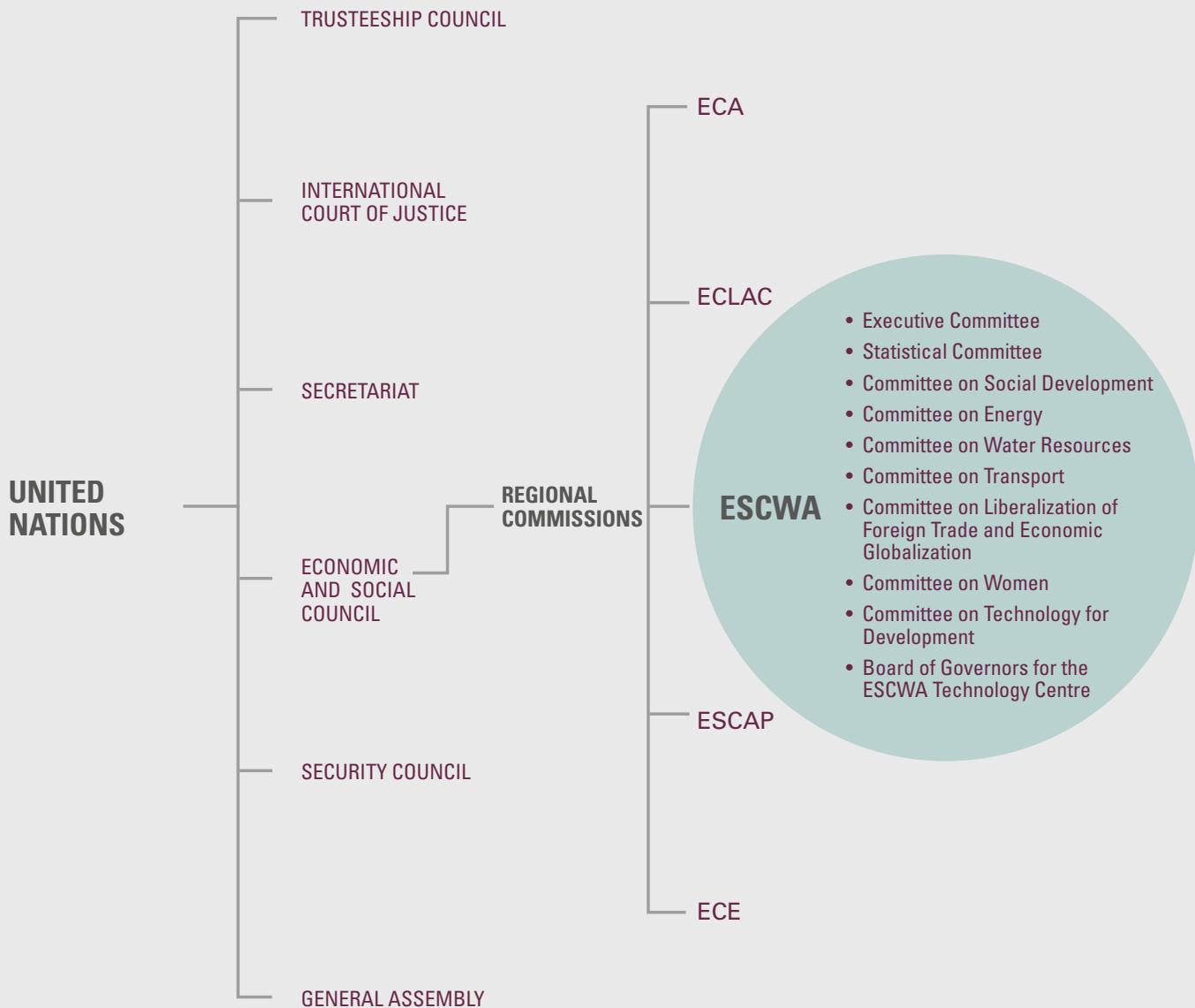


Figure 3. ESCWA organizational chart



ESCWA combines research and analytical expertise, convening power and advocacy capabilities to promote debate, develop consensus and help achieve economic and social development for the people of the Arab

region. It serves as a key regional forum to facilitate complementarity and bring the Arab voice to the world stage, ensuring local and national concerns are reflected in global policy formulation.

How ESCWA works

RESEARCH



ESCWA conducts research and produces studies and policy advice on all aspects of socioeconomic development. Knowledge is developed and shared with and for policymakers, civil society, experts and practitioners.

HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS



ESCWA organizes high-level conferences, intergovernmental meetings and capacity-building workshops to tackle socioeconomic issues. ESCWA also provides a regional forum for senior officials of member States to coordinate their positions at regional and international conferences and summits.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



ESCWA offers technical and advisory services to member States and responds to requests to support developmental efforts at national levels. ESCWA conducts training and provides specialized assistance to the development of norms and standards, and the set-up and implementation of policies and mechanisms.

PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS



ESCWA works in partnership with the League of Arab States and other Arab organizations, and in coordination with regional United Nations entities and country programmes. ESCWA also cultivates partnerships with civil society organizations and networks.

The main governing body of ESCWA is its ministerial session, which meets every two years, most recently in Tunis in September 2014. Nine intergovernmental bodies report to the governing body: the Executive Committee of senior officials and eight specialized subsidiary committees, namely: Statistical Committee, Committee on Social Development, Committee on Energy, Committee on Water Resources, Committee on Transport, Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization, Committee on Women and Committee on Technology and Development. These bodies offer a platform for interaction between technical experts, member State officials and ESCWA staff. They help formulate the work programme of the Commission and coordinate regional positions on global issues.



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2. Highlights

Social justice: the Tunis Declaration

At the twenty-eighth session of ESCWA, held in September 2014 in Tunis, the Arab States renewed their commitment to social justice as an inherent value in the culture of the region and a condition for lasting peace and development. The theme of the session, “Social justice in the policies of Arab States”, was discussed in four ministerial dialogues on the new development approach, economic policies in support of social justice, intergenerational justice, access to natural resources, and monitoring social justice. ESCWA reaffirmed its support to member States in their endeavors to achieve more just societies.

The outcome document of the session, the “Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region”, is a commitment to justice as a higher aspiration encompassing freedom and dignity, equal opportunity, respect for nature, and peace and stability. Under the Declaration, social justice has been established as a central, cross-cutting priority for ESCWA.

Post-2015 process and the sustainable development goals

ESCWA launched the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the League of Arab States during a meeting in Amman in April 2014. This milestone in the regional consultative process on sustainable development goals (SDGs) for the Arab region was coordinated by ESCWA as the focal point for Arab regional consensus on the post-2015 development agenda. The

Forum provided a means for discussing progress on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), SDGs for the Arab region and a proposed Arab strategic framework for sustainable development.

Solidarity with the Palestinian people

The General Assembly designated 2014 the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. To mark the event, ESCWA undertook various initiatives to raise awareness of the rights and plight of the Palestinian people and explore ways to support Palestinian institutions. ESCWA also prepared the annual note by the Secretary-General on the “Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan.” ESCWA further released a study on the social and economic situation of Palestinian women, launched “181 Posts”, an online awareness campaign, commissioned a report on Israeli violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention and organized a seminar on that subject in November 2014.

Gender equality

The advancement of women’s rights in the Arab region was a headline issue in 2014. ESCWA played a key role, leading a progress review on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 20 years later (Beijing+20), contributing to a High-level Ministerial Conference that adopted the Cairo Declaration on the Post-2015 Development Agenda for Women, and helping member States to submit a record number of reports

on the status of women. Legislative progress was made in several countries, with bolder commitments to gender equality and greater protection of women’s rights.

implementation rate of 98 per cent of its regular budget programme and 457 outputs were achieved. Implementation rates for the 2008-2009 and 2010-2011 biennia were 82 per cent and 96 per cent respectively.

ESCWA in numbers

ESCWA is on track to equal its performance in the 2012-2013 biennium, in which an

ESCWA introduced an evaluations policy, initiating assessment of the ESCWA Technology Centre and finalizing the reviews of three regional projects. The findings of those

Figure 4. Activities by theme and type

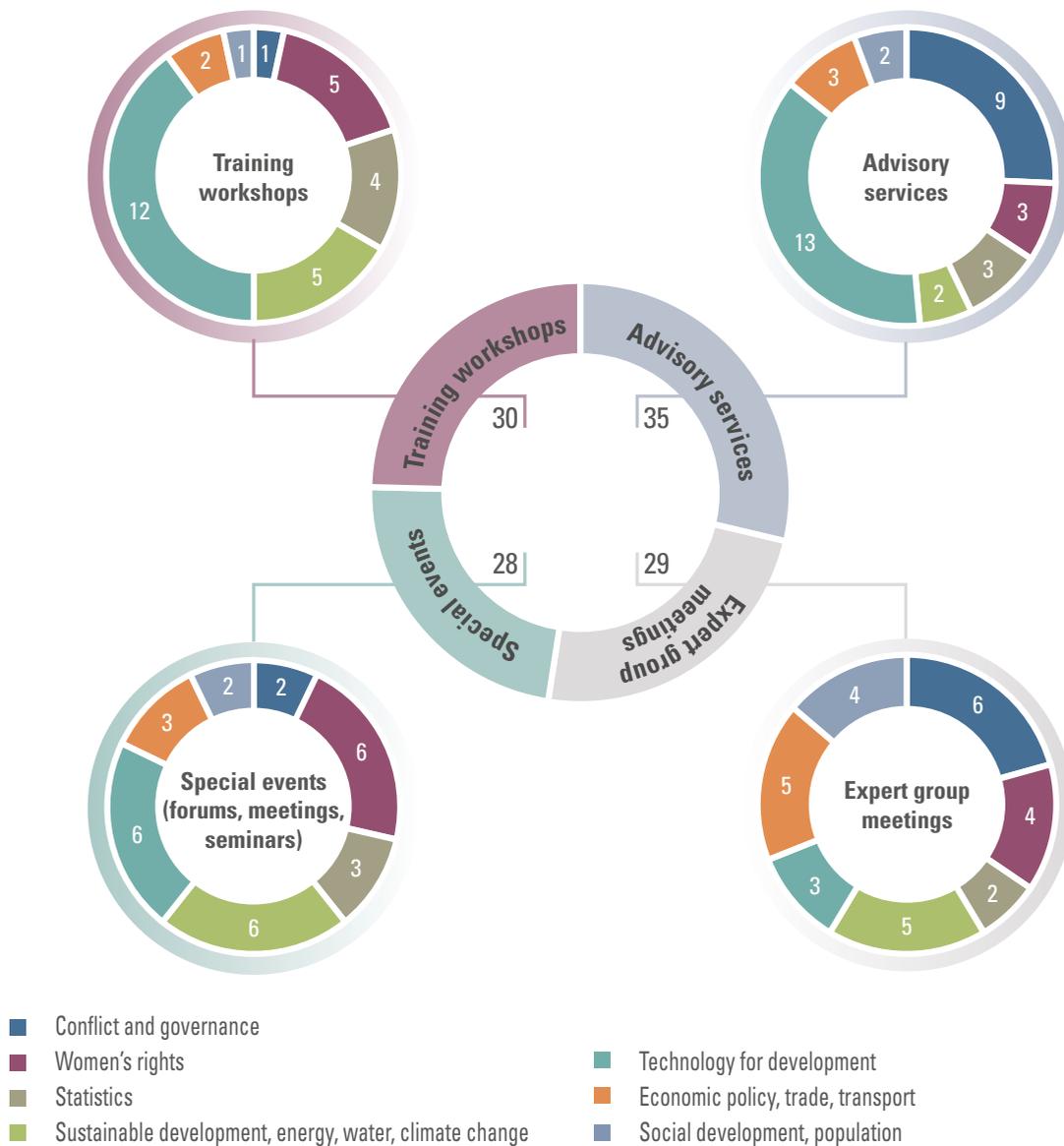
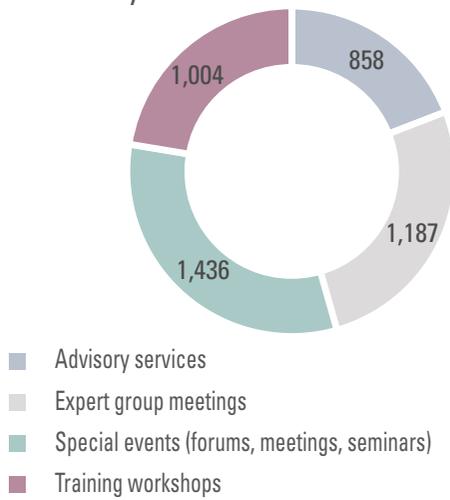


Figure 5. Number of participants by type of activity



green production, innovation and technology transfer, climate change negotiations, digital Arabic content, multilateral trade negotiations and migration.

More than 1,000 individuals benefitted from the capacity-building activities undertaken by ESCWA in 2014. Officials, civil society representatives and other development stakeholders improved their skills in such areas as policy formulation and implementation; measurement of public programme performance and building on successful initiatives; and learning from other regional experiences. Seminars on social justice, innovation, intellectual property and commercialization, and financing efficient energy investments took place throughout the region.

evaluations will be used to enhance areas of strength, address gaps and weaknesses, and improve planning.

In 2014, ESCWA completed 35 technical advisory missions in member States, including national workshops on subjects such as global risk resilience, gender mainstreaming,

ESCWA staged a series of special events at the United Nations House in Beirut in 2014: the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; the International Day for Social Justice; “Equality for Women is Progress for All”, to mark International Women’s Day; and the International Day of Persons with

Figure 6. Activities by country and type

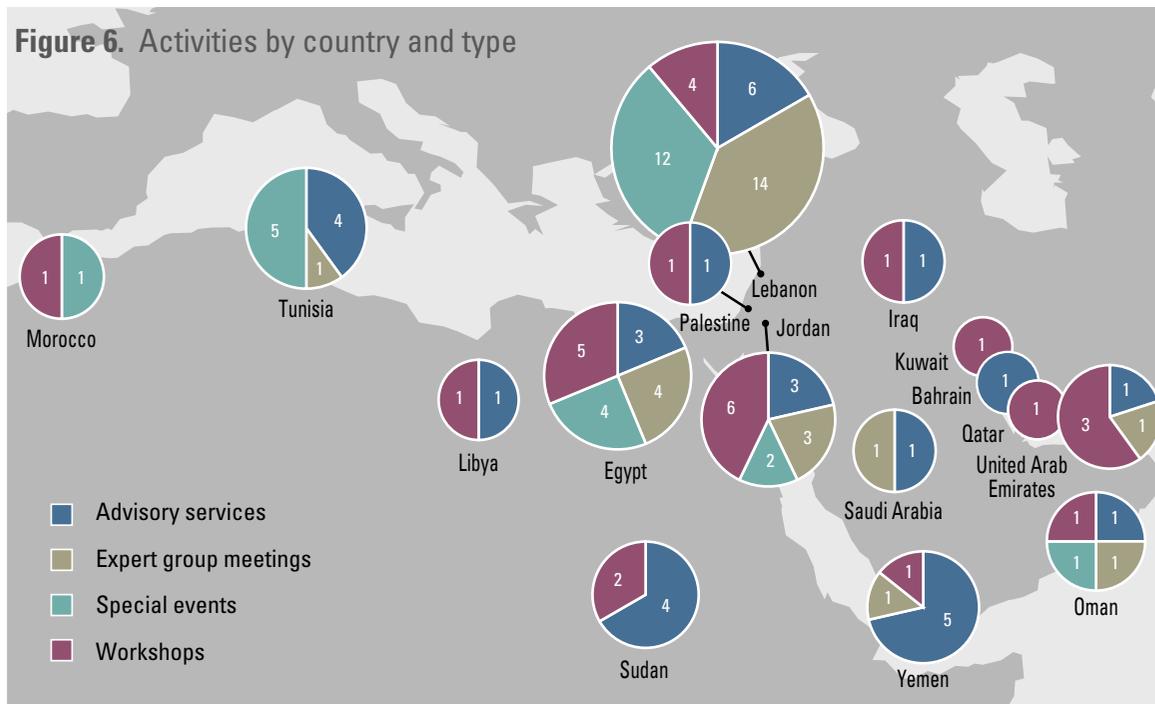


Table 1. 2014 allotments (United States dollars)

Component	Allotment
	2014
Polycymaking organs	73,600
Executive direction and management	2,295,400
Programme of work	17,502,400
Programme support	14,205,300
Business continuity	220,300
Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation	2,805,300
Safety and security	5,916,100
Total regular budget allotments	43,018,400
Development Account and extrabudgetary	15,533,384
Budget covered from programme support account	730,069
Grand total	59,281,853

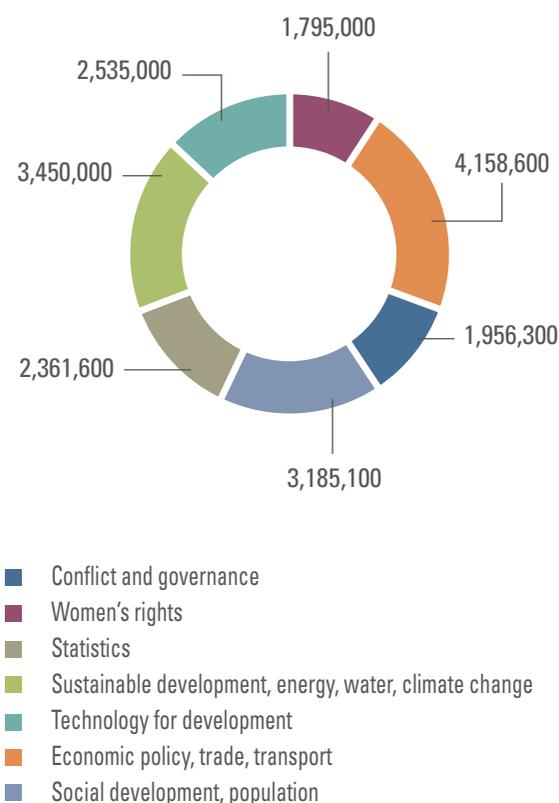
Disabilities, which was held in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

Financial information

ESCWA activities are funded through the following sources: the United Nations regular budget; the Development Account; the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC); extrabudgetary funds; and other voluntary contributions.

Regular budget

The United Nations regular budget provides funding for ESCWA to achieve the objectives set forth in its Strategic Framework, which is derived from mandates given by the United Nations. All other funding is intended to support and complement the direction outlined through the regular budget.

Figure 7. Distribution of regular programme of work + RPTC allotments by substantive area of work (United States dollars)

Development Account

The Development Account (DA) funds capacity-development projects that aim to

deliver impact through national, subregional, regional and interregional economic and social cooperation.

Table 2. DA projects as of 3 November 2014 (United States dollars)

Name of project	Budget	Status
7th tranche		
Capacity-building on climate change mitigation for poverty alleviation in Western Asia	547,200	Closed in June 2014
Regional project for strengthening statistical capacity of ESCWA countries in energy statistics and energy balance	509,000	Closed in December 2014
Strengthening national capacities in ESCWA region in developing green production sectors	491,000	Closed in December 2014
8th tranche		
Academy of ICT essentials for government leaders in the ESCWA region (AIGLE)	509,000	In progress
Institutional & capacity-building for Arab parliaments and other stakeholders for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace & Security	510,000	In progress
Strengthening capacities to utilize workers' remittances for development	464,000	In progress
Developing capacity in Arab countries for climate change adaptation by applying integrated water resource management tools	517,000	In progress
Building capacities to develop appropriate green technologies for improving the livelihood of rural communities in the ESCWA region (8th tranche additional)	591,000	In progress
9th tranche		
Strengthening the statistical capacity of ESCWA member States in producing and disseminating short-term economic indicators for sustainable growth	518,000	In progress
Promoting renewable energy investments for climate change mitigation and sustainable development	632,000	In progress
Strengthening national capacities for integrated, sustainable and inclusive population and development policies in the Arab region	714,000	In progress
Developing the capacity of ESCWA member States to address the water and energy nexus for achieving sustainable development goals	525,000	In progress
Establishing national technology development and transfer systems in selected ESCWA member States	497,000	Approved, awaiting allotment

Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation

The Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) aims to develop the capacity of member States to implement sustainable economic and social development policies. The programme promotes cooperation and the sharing of experiences across countries, and the building of knowledge networks. It is intended to bridge the gap between the needs of countries and the regular budget resources of ESCWA. The Commission is increasingly mainstreaming cross-cutting issues such as gender, human rights and environmental sustainability in its technical cooperation work. In 2014, ESCWA delivered 26 advisory services under RPTC to assist government-led policy development and initiatives, complemented by 6 regional and subregional workshops, 15 national workshops and 2 fellowships and study tours to further South-South cooperation.

Voluntary contributions

In 2014, ESCWA received 6.8 million United States dollars in voluntary contributions to implement national and regional activities under its seven subprogrammes. They

respond to needs in sectors such as water, environment, statistics, technology and innovation, social and economic development and gender. New projects were also developed to help ESCWA member States in transition.

Figure 8. Distribution of resources under RPTC (United States dollars)

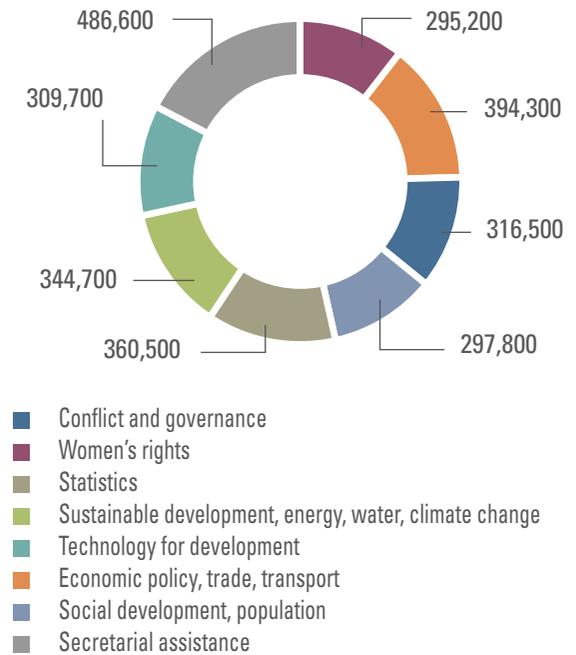
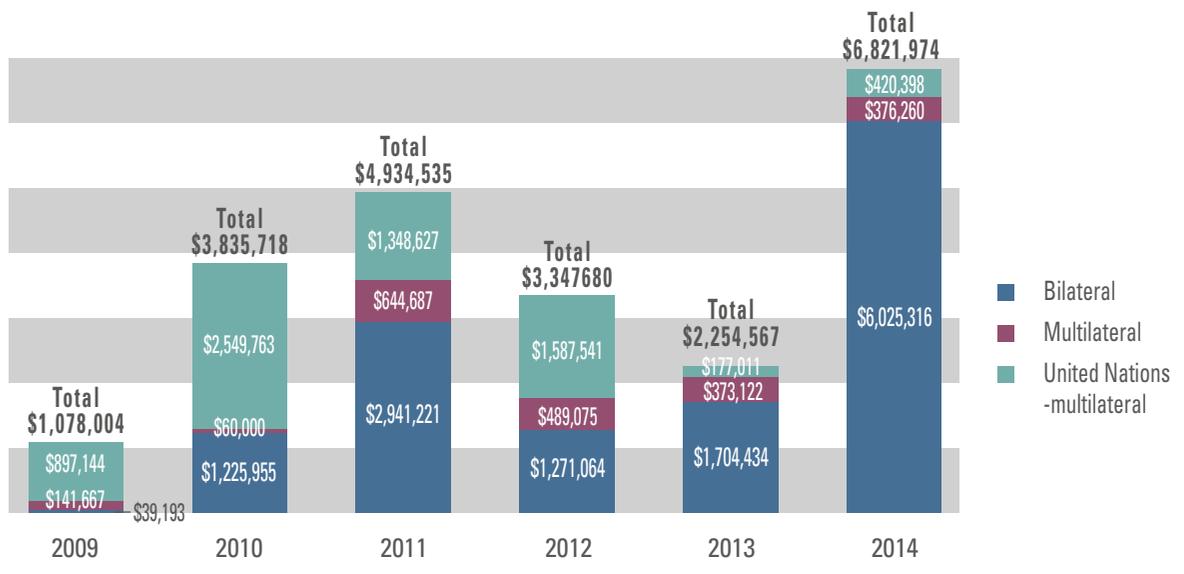


Figure 9. Voluntary contributions by donor type



Extrabudgetary resources

ESCWA is investing more in extrabudgetary projects to implement work on the regular programme. By expanding its donor

base, it has attracted funding for socioeconomic reconstruction in the Syrian Arab Republic, the development of national plans for Saudi Arabia and a host of other projects.

Table 3. Extrabudgetary projects

Project description	Begin date	End date	Allotment (US\$)
Regional advocacy and dissemination of the Arab MDG report 2013	01/11/2013	30/07/2014	51,100.0
Adaptation of climate change in the water sector in the MENA region	01/05/2012	31/07/2014	323,547.4
Operationalizing ESCWA participatory approach in public policy process in ESCWA countries	01/08/2011	01/08/2014	137,168.7
Promotion of the digital Arabic content industry through incubation - phase II	31/05/2011	30/09/2014	61,946.9
Analytical support to the Prime Minister's Office in the area of promoting knowledge society, United Arab Emirates	27/01/2014	30/09/2014	25,221.2
Arab Consultative Meeting on Accountability for Post-2015 Development Agenda	25/08/2014	30/09/2014	93,458.0
Iraqi Public Sector Modernization Programme - Phase II	01/01/2013	31/12/2014	633,278.5
Strengthening the regional cooperation in the area of population and development including national and regional capacity-building preparation for ICPD @20	01/07/2011	31/12/2014	294,304.4
Support membership in the Global Trade Analysis Project	01/02/2013	31/12/2014	43,805.3
Assessment of impact of climate change project (4306, subcontract UNISDR)	06/08/2014	31/03/2015	168,069.0
Review process of the implementation of Beijing +20 in the Arab region	21/05/2014	01/04/2015	143,392.5
(MDG + initiative) - Establishing Regional Mechanism for Improved Monitoring & Reporting on Access to Water Supply & Sanitation Services in the Arab Region	01/12/2011	30/06/2015	1,284,389.5
Socioeconomic effective human development planning for Saudi Arabia	01/01/2014	30/06/2015	1,373,578.6
National agenda for the future of Syria	26/06/2013	31/12/2015	1,429,262.6
Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region	01/12/2010	31/03/2016	3,547,989.1
Substantive work programme of ESCWA Technology Centre for Development	01/07/2011	31/12/2019	440,784.2
Operations of the ESCWA Technology Centre for Development in Amman, Jordan	01/01/2011	31/12/2020	204,001.6
Strengthening statistical capacity of Arab countries in producing energy statistics consumption surveys	06/08/2014	30/06/2015	302,000.0
Third Arab Internet Governance Forum (convening event and producing Chairman's Summary)	27/08/2014	31/05/2015	123,893.8
National agenda for the future of Syria- Finnish funding	01/11/2014	31/12/2014	219,773.0
International Comparison Programme for Western Asia (2012-2013 round)	01/12/2012	31/02/2014	397,196.3

Administrative reform: Improving the way we do business

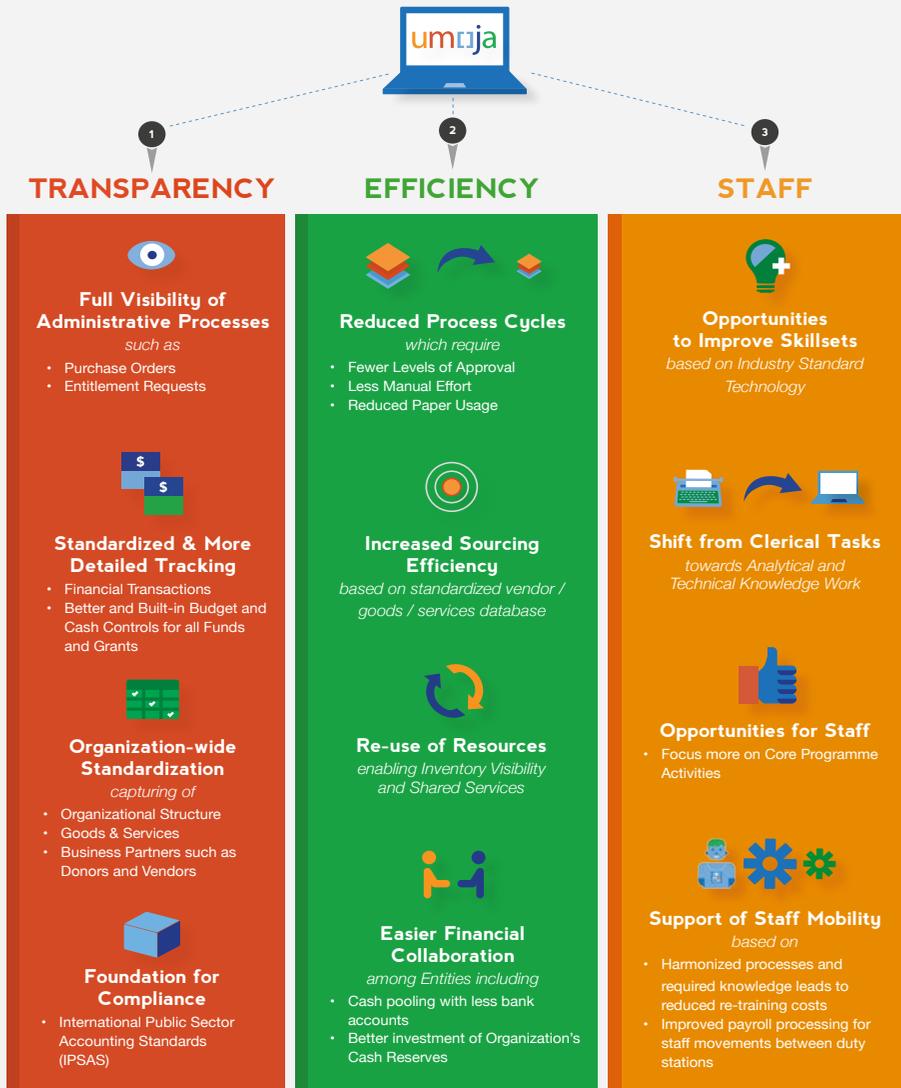


UMOJA

Umoja means “Unity” in Swahili. It is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the United Nations to upgrade technology and streamline the management of financial, human and physical resources throughout the Secretariat. Umoja is being phased in gradually and ESCWA is scheduled to “go live” in November 2015.

For more information, visit <http://umoja.un.org>.

KEY CHANGES ENABLED BY UMOJA





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IPSAS

In 2014, ESCWA completed its transition to the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). Developed under the aegis of the independent International Federation of Accountants, IPSAS provides for greater efficiency, transparency and accountability. The financial performance of ESCWA can now be better compared with that of other United Nations offices and organizations, and the management of inventory and physical assets has been greatly enhanced.

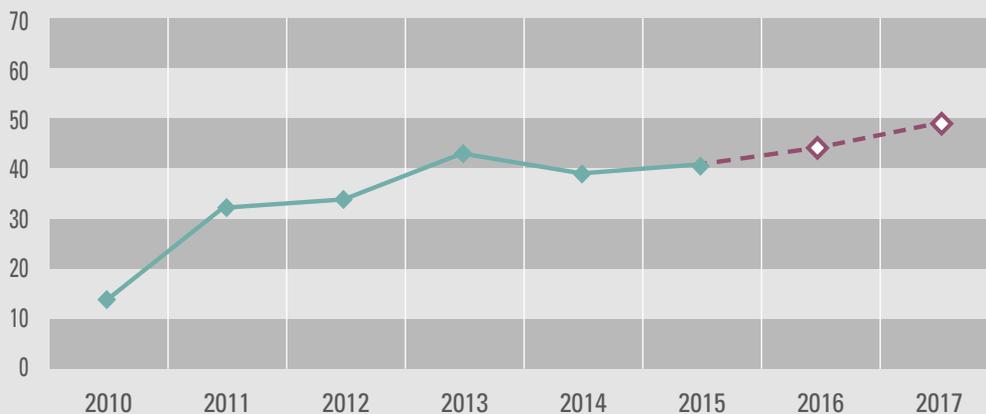
Towards gender parity

Of the 406 staff members at ESCWA, 43 per cent are women, a substantially higher proportion than is typical in the Arab region (25 per cent). The ratio of women in senior managerial positions (P5 and above) has risen from 13 per cent in 2010 to 41 per cent in 2014. A human resources gender action plan approved in 2014 envisages ESCWA reaching parity by 2017. Moreover, 60 per cent of international staff members appointed at ESCWA in 2014

were from countries underrepresented in the United Nations Secretariat.

The United Nations system-wide action plan on gender equality and the empowerment of women (UN-SWAP), developed in 2012, has been central to progress towards gender equality. In 2014, ESCWA excelled in the implementation of UN-SWAP indicators. The Commission has a five-year policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women, which sets forth how it will bridge the current gender parity gap, and has implemented a five-year succession plan, which is especially important with regard to leadership positions.

Women in leadership posts at ESCWA (Percentage)



ESCWA in the media

While ensuring strong traditional media coverage for events such as the twenty-eighth session of ESCWA in Tunis in September 2014 and the launch of the report entitled “Arab Integration: A 21st Century Development Imperative”, the Commission also expanded its social media presence in 2014. The number of Facebook followers grew by 85 per cent and Twitter is being used increasingly to interact directly with the public.

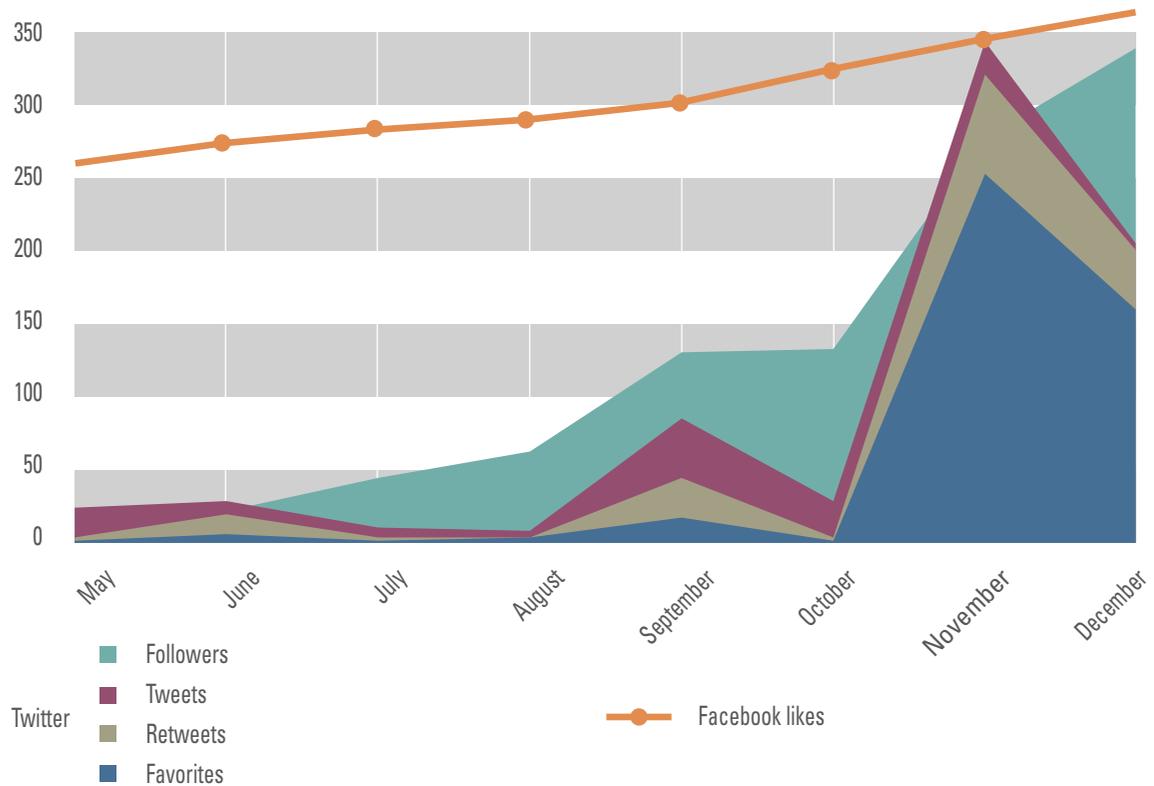
In November 2014, ESCWA launched a Twitter campaign on the Air Pollution Forum, which generated 21,700 engagements; participated in the International Day for Road Traffic Victims Twitter campaign (#RoadSafety), generating 10,100 engagements; and tweeted for the United Nations Arabic Language Day (14,500 engagements). A campaign

launched on International Women’s Day on implementation of MDGs highlighted that gender equality remains a priority in shaping the post-2015 development agenda. ESCWA also helped build momentum around the 16 days of activism to end violence against women, by releasing a daily message on steps to combat such violence in the Arab region.

In 2014, ESCWA produced a well-received documentary film to mark its fortieth anniversary, which was presented at the twenty-eighth session and is available on YouTube. ESCWA also issued a commemorative booklet retracing its history, milestones and achievements, entitled “Working for a Just and Prosperous Arab World”.

Follow ESCWA on [facebook.com/unescwa](https://www.facebook.com/unescwa) and twitter.com/ESCWACIU.

Figure 10. ESCWA and social media, 2014

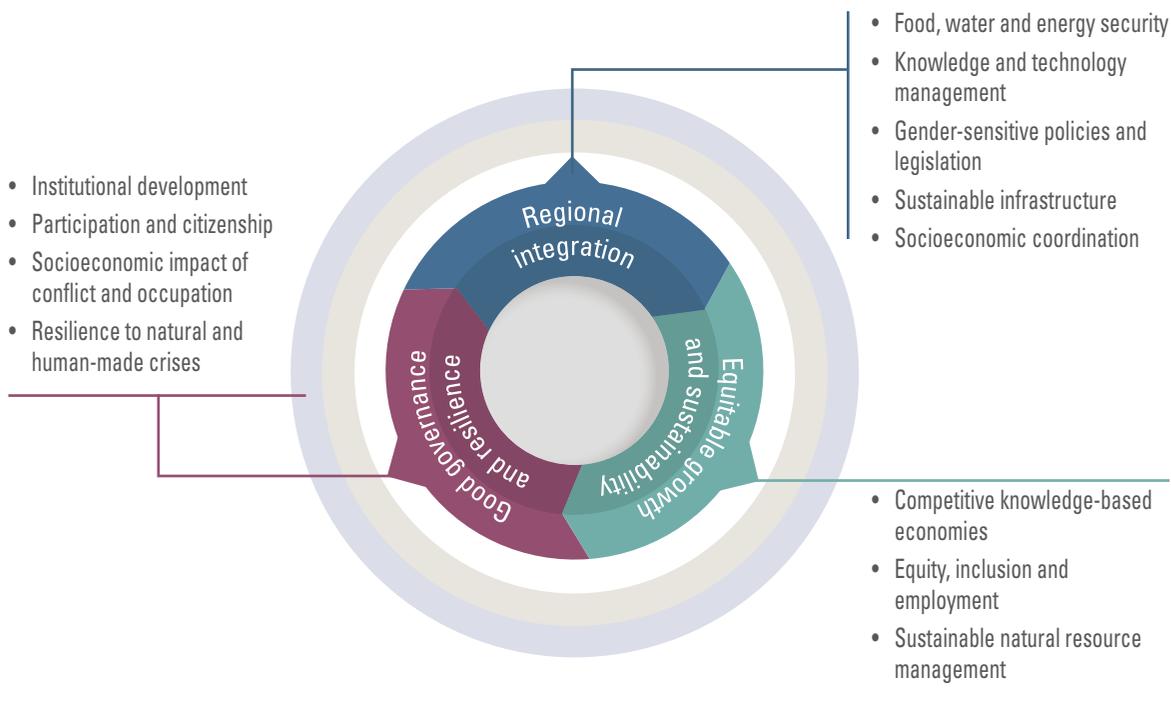


Strategic Framework

The ESCWA Strategic Framework shapes the Commission's work and is composed of three main pillars, further divided into 12

sub-themes. Each pillar is presented as a chapter in this report. Topics may appear in more than one chapter, as the Commission works in an interdisciplinary manner.

Figure 11. The ESCWA Strategic Framework for 2014-2015



3. Regional Integration

Through its work on regional integration, ESCWA seeks to advance development in the Arab region by strengthening ties in numerous areas, notably:

- Food, water and energy security
- Knowledge and technology management
- Gender-sensitive policies and legislation
- Sustainable infrastructure
- Socioeconomic policy coordination

The Arab region is tremendously diverse but shares strands of common cultural fabric, from language to history, art and science. Common challenges face many Arab countries: conflict, displacement and migration; high unemployment among youth and women; rapid, poorly planned urbanization; illiteracy and a shortage of skilled labour, food and water scarcity and land degradation. The crises rocking the region underscore the pressing need for regional integration.

Food, water and energy security

Overcoming water scarcity and ensuring energy security are among the toughest sustainable development challenges facing the Arab region. Unsustainable production and consumption patterns, rising living standards, population dynamics, transmission losses and operational costs, climate change, pollution and regional uncertainty all hamper efforts to meet the region's growing demand for food, water and energy.

With the help of ESCWA, Arab States adopted a preliminary set of regional sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the Arab

Regional integration in action: Statistics

In 2014, ESCWA implemented projects in line with global initiatives and international standards. Comparability of price statistics was enhanced by the roll out in the region of the largest ever global statistical initiative, the International Comparison Program. It involves 199 countries, including 12 from the Arab region: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, the State of Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The project produces purchasing power parity estimates and price indices that foster regional integration, help to measure real growth and promote sustainable development. ESCWA focused on the implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008 (SNA 2008) and promoted the development of supporting economic statistics and international classifications. This set the stage for an integrated economic statistics platform, which is at the heart of the United Nations development agenda.

Sustainable Development Forum was launched in 2014. ESCWA contributed tools for monitoring progress in addressing food, water and energy security. The food-water-energy nexus was examined as a mechanism for advancing integrated natural resource management in the light of regional priorities, including creating employment, fostering rural development and reducing import dependency.

ESCWA worked with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Food Policy Research Institute



Snapshot of the Arab Spatial website, available from www.arabspatial.org

and CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions, and Markets on the Arab spatial project, which analyses access to food and the resulting nutritional status of individuals.

Energy

Sustainable use and development of energy resources will help to meet growing energy needs. Rural areas face many challenges: population growth; scarce arable land and water resources that generate structural poverty; rural-urban migration and unemployment. The region lacks the equal access to energy resources needed to generate economic growth. Throughout 2014, Arab countries continued to take steps to improve sustainable energy use by: ensuring access to modern energy services; improving energy efficiency; and increasing the share of renewable energy in the energy mix.

A declaration on the role of small and medium enterprises in promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency was adopted in June 2014 in Egypt at the Second Arab Forum for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency. The forum, organized by the European Union, the Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RCREEE), the League of Arab States

and ESCWA, looked at financial, legal and institutional mechanisms to support renewable energy and energy efficiency objectives.

At the Fifth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, hosted in November 2014 by Tunisia and the five United Nations regional commissions, the executive secretaries of the commissions pledged to help member States to secure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy, in line with the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) initiative of the Secretary-General.

ESCWA equipped the American University of Beirut with a renewable energy training and educational centre. It houses models of renewable energy applications, such as solar, biomass, wind and geothermal energy, and will help member States to increase use of renewables and promote integrated rural development.

Water security and land degradation

The Arab region is one of the most vulnerable areas in the world to climate change, water scarcity and land degradation. At its May 2014 session in Doha, the Arab Ministerial



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Water Council mandated ESCWA to establish a regional knowledge hub for water and climate with the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD). The hub will provide an online platform for disseminating findings on regional climate modelling, hydrological modelling and vulnerability assessment. The hub is part of the United Nations-League of Arab States Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR), which is coordinated by ESCWA.

In 2014, ESCWA organized a dialogue on the Jordan River Basin (Amman, April) and, with Chatham House and the Prince of Wales' International Sustainability Unit, a high-level workshop on Euphrates River Stress: Towards Tripartite Cooperation for Sound River Management (London, June). Officials from riparian Governments at both events deepened their understanding of the need for cooperation in managing shared water resources. Further workshops and meetings were organized on green and clean production sectors (El Gouna, Egypt, June, and Beirut, September), the accountability framework for the post-2015

development agenda (Tunis, September), financing energy efficiency investments, capacity development for climate change negotiations, water scarcity, urban water management and the water-energy nexus.

Knowledge and technology management

The ability to benefit from changes in knowledge technology varies significantly from country to country. Harmonized efforts at the regional level to facilitate the use of technology, science and innovation will help to forge information and knowledge societies. ESCWA aims to advance technology-based innovation in the Arab countries and promote regional technology transfer. Joint efforts in applied scientific research pave the way for more competitive economies.

In June 2014, the ESCWA Technology Centre (ETC) hosted the 14th annual meeting of the Coordination Committee of Industrial Research Centres in Arab Countries, part of the League of Arab States. Joint research projects involving 11 countries in the fields of food, water and renewable energy were approved.



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ETC has initiated and monitors regional research projects on industrialization and sustainable development.

In the course of the year, ESCWA continued to support the development of digital Arabic content; promote a safer cyberspace and responsible Internet governance; match small and medium technology enterprises with investors; and advance e-government services. During the E-Government Summit, held in Dubai in February, ESCWA and the United Arab Emirates launched a project to develop a maturity index to assess the quality of electronic and mobile government services. ESCWA also proposed the establishment of a council of electronic and mobile government programme directors in the Arab countries, building on a similar model used by Gulf Cooperation Council countries. It is set to launch in 2015.

Internet governance is an area of growing concern in the region. The Third Annual Meeting of the Arab Internet Governance Forum (AIGF-III), hosted in Beirut in November 2014 by ESCWA and the Lebanese Ministry of Telecommunications, provided the ideal platform for tackling issues such as Internet infrastructure and access, global public policies, openness, privacy and building trust.

Trust is a key concept and ESCWA worked hard in 2014 to promote cybersafety and build the capacity of member States to combat cybercrime. At a capacity-building workshop on cybercrime, held in Muscat in December 2014, ESCWA put forward its Policy Recommendations on Cybercrime and Cybersafety for the Arab Region. The workshop covered subjects such as new technology threats, the role of awareness-raising campaigns and national Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs), and the importance of regional and international cooperation in dealing with cross-border cybercrimes and investigations. Decision-makers received training in procedural aspects of cybercrime law.

In the framework of its Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders in the Arab region (AIGLE), ESCWA developed four training modules in 2014 covering the linkage between ICT applications and development; ICT for development (ICT4D); e-government policies and applications; and Internet governance.

During 2014, seven capacity-building and 18 advisory services were carried out at the request of ESCWA member States. Capacity-building activities included workshops on e-learning in the Sudan, automation and decision support systems in Yemen and Internet legislation in Libya. Advisory services ranged from assistance

Cooperation in research and technological innovation

At the Third Technical Committee meeting, organized by the ESCWA Technology Centre (ETC) in June in Amman, a suggested road map for future cooperation in research and technological innovation was presented. ETC seminars in the course of the year included one in Beirut designed to advise recipients of ICT Innovation vouchers from the European Commission on commercialization options, one in Cairo on establishing technology transfer offices for universities in Egypt and Tunis, and another in Amman on technology transfer and IP policy templates and tools for Birzeit University in Palestine.

on modernizing Sudanese cybercrime law was conducted in November.

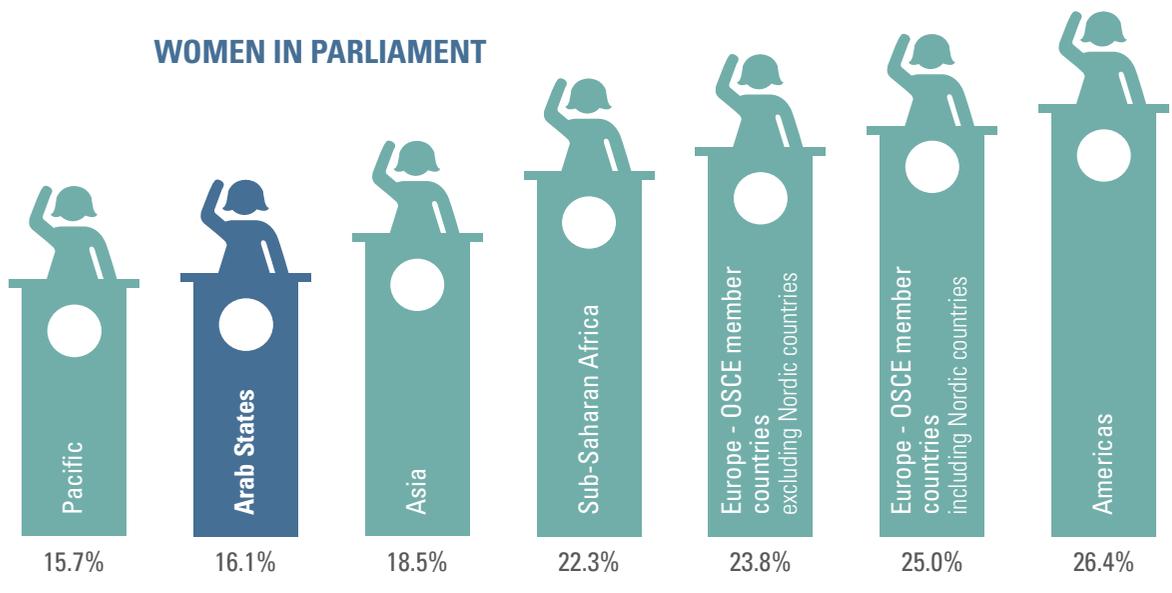
In 2014, ESCWA analysed aspects of ICT infrastructure for development, covering topics such as Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) and Critical Internet Resources (CIR). A workshop organized by ESCWA on IXPs looked at business models, common governance structures and policies for building a pan-Arab IXP. CIR was discussed at the Third Annual Meeting of the Arab Internet Governance Forum (AIGF-III). ESCWA is also working to build expertise in the use of outer space for civilian applications and development.

with the establishment of an information network in Yemen to a mission in Saudi Arabia to enhance e-services at the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Higher Council of Innovation and Excellence in the State of Palestine received assistance on setting guidelines for a national innovation strategy in September, and a study

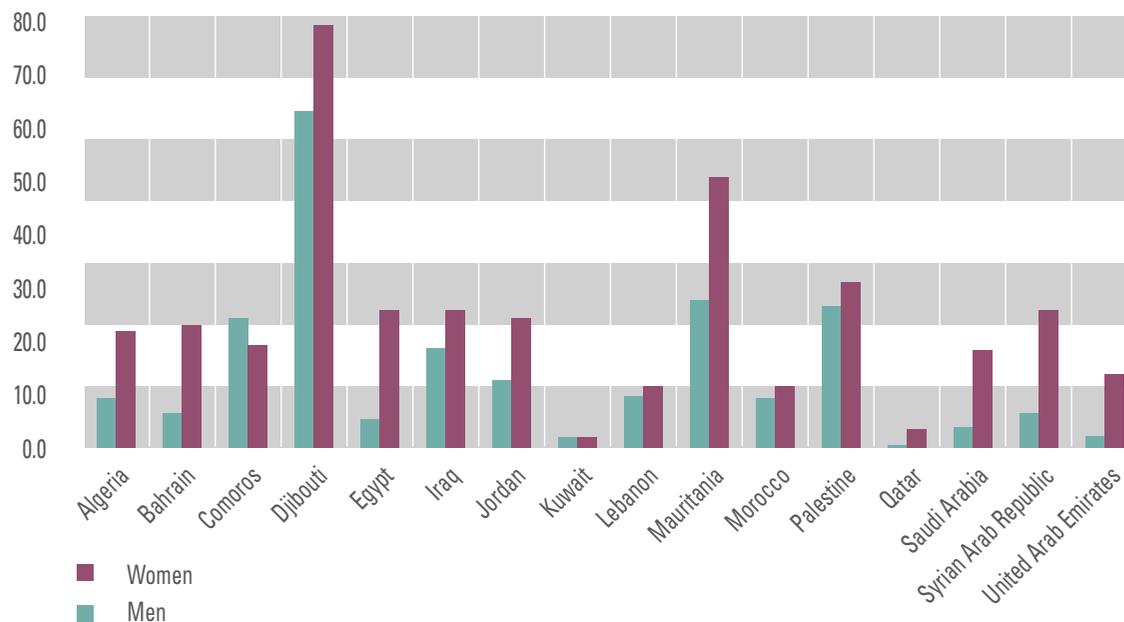
Advancement of women and gender equality

ESCWA focuses on the creation of regional frameworks in line with international conventions, the design of participatory governance mechanisms and national development strategies, the adoption of

Figure 12. Women’s political participation, 2014



Abbreviation: OSCE, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.
Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union data.

Figure 13. Unemployment by gender

Source: United Nations Statistics Division data. Available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/indwfm/default.htm>.

gender-sensitive policies and campaigns to combat gender-based violence.

International processes and regional frameworks

The global 20-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the prominent place given to women's rights in discussions on SDGs brought the matter of the advancement of women into sharp focus in 2014. The Beijing Declaration commits States to implementing practical measures to achieve gender equality and provide better opportunities for women, and is subject to regular reviews. ESCWA, in conjunction with UN-Women and the League of Arab States, led regional efforts to review implementation of the Beijing Declaration and national reports on the status of women were submitted by a record 20 States, in some cases for the first time. ESCWA also contributed to a joint High-level Ministerial Conference that adopted the Cairo Declaration on the Post-2015 Development Agenda for Women – Opportunities and Challenges.

Participatory governance and gender-sensitive policies, legislation and budgets

Arab women today face great uncertainty at a time of economic difficulties, regime change, political instability and conflict. Gender discrimination persists at all levels of society and institutions, and in legislation. Access to resources, employment and decision-making remains unequal and limited. Positive changes have nonetheless taken place. In Egypt and Tunisia, key reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women were removed and new constitutions enshrined gender equality and women's rights. Quotas for women were established in the Egyptian Parliament and local councils. In Iraq, an action plan was drafted for the protection of women and girls in times of conflict. The State of Palestine adopted the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy to increase women's participation in decision-making and the labour market, reduce violence against women, ensure that they have equal access to

Gender-sensitive budgeting in the State of Palestine

In 2014, the State of Palestine announced its intention to mainstream gender in its national budget by 2017, a first in the Arab region. ESCWA ran workshops for specialists from the Ministry of Social Affairs in Lebanon and from eight ministries in the State of Palestine on implementing gender mainstreaming at the policy, programme and budget levels. Expert group meetings and a series of gender discussions were held throughout the year on issues such as women's access to justice, women's rights, and women, peace and security.

all basic services, and mainstream gender in policies and budgeting.

With the support of ESCWA, Qatar presented its first national report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The ESCWA Centre for Women initiated a regional programme of work in support of gender-sensitive policies, legislation and budgets. Yemen received assistance on integrating the rights of women and girls into a draft new constitution. In Saudi Arabia and the Sudan, advice was provided on social policy.

To mark International Women's Day, the Commission launched its "Equality for Women is Progress for All" campaign, which included social media initiatives and an exposition at United Nations House in Beirut.



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Gender-based violence

Women continue to face gender-based violence, worsened by occupation and war, but positive steps have been taken in some countries. Lebanon has passed legislation against domestic violence, increasing protection measures with key reforms in the police and judiciary. Nonetheless, civil society has expressed concern about gaps in the new law. A Palestinian presidential decree abolished extenuating circumstances that had hitherto applied to the murder of women. Under the revised Criminal Code in Egypt, the definition of harassment has been broadened and harsher penalties have been provided for. A female anti-harassment police unit has also been set up. In spite of opposition, a bill was brought before Parliament in Yemen setting 18 as the minimum marrying age and criminalizing female genital mutilation.

In 2014, ESCWA organized workshops in Egypt and Tunisia to discuss legislation against gender-based violence, started developing a toolkit for service and protection provision, which will be piloted in 2015, and undertook research on women's access to justice and child marriage in humanitarian settings. It also helped the League of Arab States to formulate a strategy on violence against women and organized advocacy activities in the context of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign (25 November to 10 December 2014).

Socioeconomic policy coordination

The Arab region faces major challenges that often exceed the capacities of individual countries and hinder trade. Regional economic integration is crucial for promoting sustainable development, fostering human security and enabling countries to benefit from globalization. Aid for trade (AfT) and intraregional trade and transport are keys to integration.

The desire to fully implement the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA) and establish the Arab Customs Union by 2015 has been expressed at past in Arab Economic and Social Summits, and a primary goal for ESCWA is to foster regional economic cooperation and integration. Its work is aimed at promoting macroeconomic and sector policy coordination, reducing trade costs, developing and diversifying exports, and promoting intra-Arab trade and mobility of persons and capital. ESCWA has assisted member States in negotiating and implementing regional and multilateral trade agreements and taken an increasingly active role in promoting intra-Arab trade by, for instance, working to harmonize non-tariff measures.

The establishment of an Arab trade and economic integration centre was approved at the twenty-eighth ministerial session of ESCWA. It will undertake capacity-building initiatives to help ESCWA member States to adapt to multilateral trade and regional integration processes, such as changes wrought in international trade by the 2013 Bali Package, which was aimed at streamlining trade, fostering food security in developing countries and boosting the trade of least developed countries.

Aid for trade (AfT)

ESCWA runs a project on facilitating the effective integration of developing countries in the global economy through aid for trade schemes, which is designed to boost member States' understanding of AfT parameters and their capacity to make project proposals in line with common donor requirements. Two regional workshops were organized in 2014 to help officials from member States to understand the requirements for clear and systematic monitoring and evaluation of AfT projects.

Intraregional trade and transport

In 2014, ESCWA launched a project to promote paperless trade. It started with an assessment of the capacity of customs systems in Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia to exchange data with customs authorities in other countries. Tunisia was then selected to pilot the project and assisted with connecting to an international platform for the exchange of customs data. This will help to simplify international trade procedures. A regional workshop was held in Dubai in March 2014 on the Bali Package on international trade and an expert group meeting on Macroeconomic and Sector Policy Coordination and Arab Economic Integration was held in Dubai in November.



4. Equitable Growth and Sustainability

ESCWA is committed to helping its member States to deliver sustainable and just development, achieve MDGs and contribute to the formulation of SDGs. To that end, it follows a three-pronged approach:

- Competitive knowledge-based economies
- Equity, inclusion and employment
- Sustainable natural resource management

ESCWA analyses and delivers advice on poverty alleviation, income distribution and sustainable equitable development in order to meet MDGs in the Arab region.

In 2014, ESCWA secured commitment to social justice in the region with the adoption of the Tunis Declaration at its twenty-eighth session in September. In addition, An Arab Perspective on the Post-2015 Agenda: National Targets, Regional Priorities and Global Goals, a report presented by ESCWA at the Arab High-level Forum on Sustainable Development in Amman in April 2014, provided substantial material for establishing Arab priorities on sustainable development. Its input was pivotal in shaping ministerial declarations on Arab regional priorities for the post-2015 development agenda.

Competitive, knowledge-based economies

Competitive, knowledge-based economies are based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge as the main engine for growth. In addition to monitoring progress on regional research on industrialization and sustainable development, ESCWA organized a regional workshop in 2014 on knowledge transfer

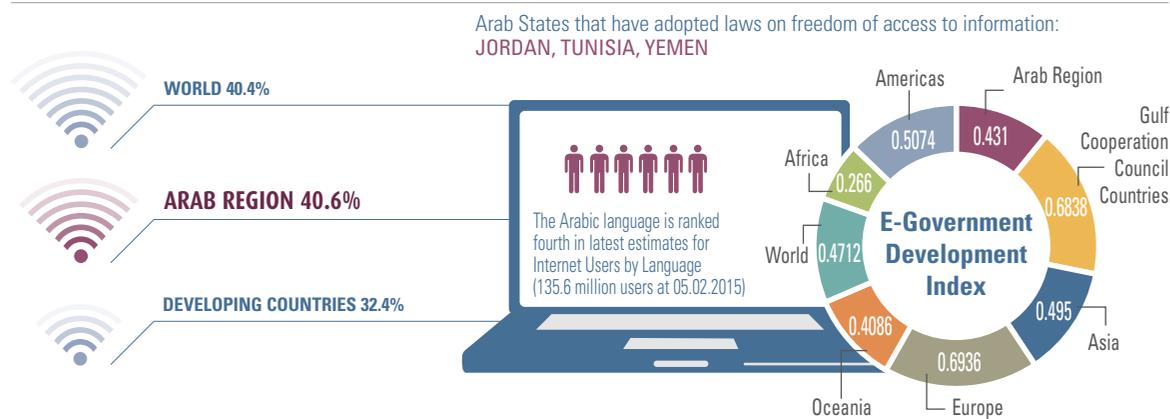
in science and technology parks and the role of Governments, universities, industry and financial enterprises in that process. It also organized an expert group meeting on setting up an innovation scoreboard for the region. ESCWA continued to support entrepreneurs in creating start-ups and small and medium enterprises specialized in digital Arabic content, such as online marketplaces and e-learning mobile applications. ESCWA worked closely with five technology incubators to reach young entrepreneurs and graduates in selected ESCWA member States.

Winners of national digital Arabic content competitions held in 2014 in Egypt and Tunisia received support in the form of one year of “incubation”, which includes access to office facilities, business coaching, marketing and legal advice, and training on how to establish a technology start-up. The promotion of digital Arabic content through incubation project ended in December 2014 with the creation of nine start-up companies across five Arab countries: Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

ESCWA worked with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Egypt, the International Telecommunication Union Arab Regional Office and the League of Arab States to organize the Second Annual Digital Arabic Content Forum, on the impact of the digital Arabic content industry on development. The forum looked at technology trends, the role of Governments in developing initiatives for digital Arabic content, the promotion of such content through regional cooperation and integration, and the role of creativity and innovation in the promotion of

Figure 14. Access to information and e-government development

CURRENT INTERNET PENETRATION



Source: www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm. New E-Government Development Index (EGDI) values are available from: <http://unpan3.un.org/egovkb/Data-Center> and http://unpan3.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2014-Survey/E-Gov_Complete_Survey-2014.pdf (pp. 20 and 30).

the national and the Arabic economic systems. In addition, ESCWA staged events throughout the year to match 15 innovators with investors so as to scale up promising start-ups in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia.

Equity, inclusion and employment

The second priority area within the work of ESCWA on equitable growth and sustainability is equity, inclusion and employment.

Inclusive social development

In its efforts to help member States to pursue inclusive social development, ESCWA undertakes field projects, seminars, meetings and e-forums on youth empowerment, population and development, social justice and democratic governance. It provides member States with technical assistance on a rights-based approach to policy and encourages the mainstreaming of social justice in national reform plans. Throughout the year, ESCWA conducted consultations on social policy reform aimed at a fairer redistribution of wealth, greater public involvement in policymaking and maximizing the benefits of

population dynamics in the prevailing context of the youth bulge, large-scale displacement and labour migration.

The 15th Meeting of the Heads of National Population Councils in the Arab Region, co-organized by ESCWA, the League of Arab States and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), focused on four priority areas:

- the impact of population dynamics, particularly forced migration resulting from conflicts and occupation, on development
- youth empowerment
- equality and empowerment of women
- reproductive and sexual health

At a follow-up meeting held by ESCWA in November, a framework reference was proposed for priority population programmes implementing the 2013 Cairo Declaration on Development Challenges and Population Dynamics in a Changing Arab World.

In the course of the year, ESCWA convened a series of national workshops in Egypt, Palestine and the Sudan on policymaking, strategic planning and evaluation, and programme cycle management. It also provided technical assistance to the Ministry

The Tunis Declaration

The Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region, adopted at the twenty-eighth ESCWA session in September 2014, represents a contract between ESCWA and member States to promote social justice through the development of policies based on rights, equality and equity, and the elimination of all forms of social injustice and discrimination in Arab countries through legislative and constitutional reforms.

of Social Development in Oman to develop its 10-year Social Work Strategy for the period 2016-2025. Some 136 officials benefited from those initiatives. ESCWA began work on the following publications, due for completion in 2015:

- Participatory Processes in Arab Countries Undergoing Democratic Transition
- The Impact of Population Policies on Human Development in the Arab Countries
- Inclusive Social Development in the Arab Region
- Situation Report on International Migration and Development in the Arab Region

These publications will be complemented by capacity-building workshops and advisory services in support of policies on youth, migration, persons with disabilities and good governance.

Social protection

Fifteen Arab countries were represented at a regional conference on Social Protection as Development in Riyadh in November 2014, from which a number of recommendations on broader participation in reform processes emerged. Interest was expressed in the forthcoming toolkit prepared by ESCWA on Building National Capacities in the Design and Implementation of Integrated Social Protection Policies Using a Participatory Approach.

Employment

ESCWA conducted a migration training workshop in Cairo in September 2014 for government officials on the design and development of rights-based policies to promote social integration, the provision of adequate services and employment generation for migrants and those affected by migration. On 15 December 2014, ESCWA launched its report entitled "Arab Middle Class: Measurement and Role in Driving Change", which suggests that empowerment of the embattled Arab middle class could help the region to overcome its development and governance challenges.

Equity and inclusion

ESCWA took a leading role in releasing Disability in the Arab Region: An Overview, the first compilation of baseline information on disability for the 22 Arab countries, and will continue to encourage national development processes that take persons with disabilities fully into account. The Commission's commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in December 2014 featured high-level discussions on the plight of persons with disabilities in humanitarian crises. It was concluded that persons with disabilities were disproportionately affected by natural disasters and armed conflict and that work had to be done to build resilience and promote inclusion before disaster struck. Particular action was needed to promote the access of persons with disabilities to quality education, comprehensive health services and inclusive livelihood programmes. The Commission will maintain focus on those issues in its capacity as Chair of the Inter-Agency Support Group for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2015.

The regional forum on Addressing Social and Economic Inequalities: The Need for a New Development Paradigm was organized by ESCWA, in conjunction with the Arab NGO Network for Development, the Arab

Promoting data-driven and evidence-based policies and decision-making to attain MDGs

In 2014, ESCWA stepped up efforts to foster the production of high-quality socioeconomic statistics in the Arab region and enhance capacity-building in member States. The Commission now provides more timely, reliable and accessible data on national accounts, prices, trade, industry, energy, the environment, health, education, employment and population. It provides greater access to regional data through various publications and newly developed e-portals, and is increasingly seen as the gateway for technical assistance on economic statistics in the Arab region.

The 2011 round of the International Comparison Program (ICP), the largest ever worldwide statistical initiative, came to a successful conclusion in February 2014. ESCWA played a key role in implementing ICP at the regional level, which enabled it to release purchasing power parities (PPPs) and price indices allowing a more accurate measurement of the relative sizes of economies and, in turn, the design of more appropriate policies and targeted investment. PPP results for Western Asia are available from www.escwa.un.org/icp2011/index.asp. Following their release, the ICP Regional Office at ESCWA devised a plan to produce reliable PPP estimates for 2012 and 2013, making the Arab region the first in which such an exercise has been attempted. ICP implementation in the Arab region also helped to improve data on national accounts. ESCWA, which is pursuing the establishment

of a regional strategy on the subject, conducted a two-week training course on national accounts with the International Monetary Fund in 2014. Its success was demonstrated by subsequent requests from member States for follow-up activities and advisory missions, which were duly met.

Extensive training was provided in 2014 on compiling data for the energy products used in the production, trade, transformation and consumption of goods. Some countries have already begun compiling a yearly energy balance.

All data publications are available on the ESCWA e-Publications Portal, available from: data.escwa-stat.org.

ESCWA has also developed a dashboard (<http://dashboard.escwa-stat.org>) to provide a picture of the status of MDG indicators in the 22 Arab countries and progress made over time in selected indicators. It also provides three profiles for each country on key development indicators; youth indicators; and gender issues.



Organization for Administrative Development, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the Ford Foundation, in Beirut in June 2014. Participants reached consensus on key sustainable development issues in support of the post-2015 development agenda and adopted an outcome document calling for greater justice in redistribution policies and legislative and financial reform to achieve social policies based on sovereignty, equality and rights.

Sustainable natural resource management

In 2014, ESCWA continued to work with Arab countries to achieve integrated and sustainable management of their natural resources through strengthened regional cooperation and policy coordination.

In an effort to aid rural communities, ESCWA prepared field surveys in 2014 in four pilot countries (Jordan, Morocco, Oman and the Sudan) and linked locally sourced renewable energy technologies to production processes that have the potential to enhance productivity and increase income. ESCWA has prepared technical material to map

electricity management structures in Arab countries and is running projects to develop relevant skills in the public and private sectors. One goal is to help authorities to introduce much needed reforms to enhance financing of energy efficiency projects. ESCWA also responded to a request from Yemen to train officials in the use of solar energy in agricultural water pumps and in finance mechanisms for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.

The establishment of green help desks in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman and Tunisia was followed by workshops on the help desks and green production in the course of 2014 and a study tour for help desk coordinators and the directors of Cleaner Production Centres in the Arab region in September. The Use of Unconventional Water in Urban Water Management seminar, held in Oman in February, was aimed at fostering the integrated management of water resources. In October, the Arab Integrated Water Resources Management Network, in conjunction with Cap-Net UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and the Water Footprint Network, held a training course in Oman for water and environment professionals.



5. Good Governance and Resilience

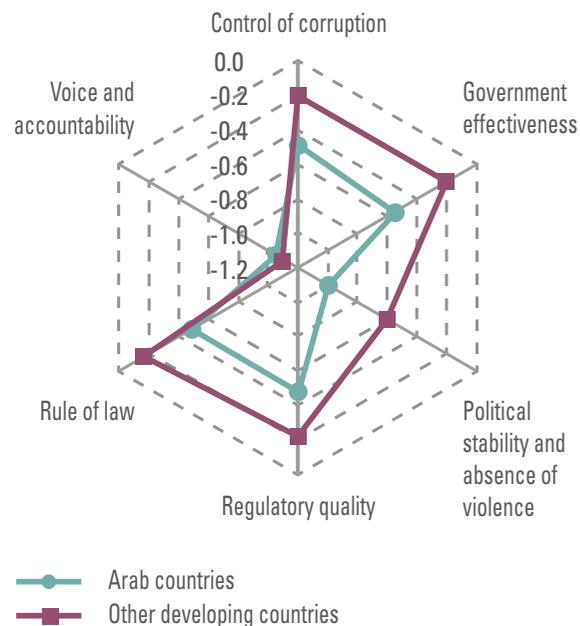
The third pillar of the Commission's work, good governance and resilience, is the prism through which ESCWA encourages member States to foster participative and inclusive government and promote crisis resilience. There are four priority areas:

- Institutional development
- Participation and citizenship
- Socioeconomic impact of conflict and occupation
- Resilience to natural and human-made crises

Several Arab countries, including Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, have suffered the ravages of conflict in recent years. Fighting has also taken a heavy toll on neighbouring countries, especially Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. More than 40 per cent of Arab countries have experienced at least one episode of conflict in the past five years. Displacement of people has reached unprecedented levels, with 2.1 per cent of the region's population registered as refugees in 2013 and 2.9 per cent as internally displaced. The region shows negative scores for "political stability and absence of violence" in the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGIs).

The Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory continues to entail gross violations of international law and human rights, manifested through collective punishment, arbitrary detention, excessive use of force, population displacement and an illegal de facto annexation by Israeli authorities. By 2014, a quarter of the Palestinian population was living in poverty and unemployment

Figure 15. WGIs: Arab countries and other developing countries, 2013



Source: ESCWA calculations based on data from World Bank.

stood at 26 per cent. The Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip in the summer of 2014 left 2,254 Palestinians dead and some 120,000 homeless. Reconstruction has been hampered by a blockade that has been in place for seven years.

When the turmoil subsides, tough and complex tasks will be faced on the road to building equitable and inclusive societies, strong economies and resilient systems of government. In 2014, ESCWA assisted member States by promoting responsive institutions and accountable service delivery, supported crucial policy initiatives in order to restore stability, and carried out

capacity-building programmes to strengthen national institutions. ESCWA has been active in documenting violations by Israel of international law and their impact on the Palestinian people.

Institutional development

There is a yawning gap between the Arab countries and other developing regions in terms of the effectiveness of institutions and regulatory policy. Government effectiveness is consistently identified as a significant source of risk across the region. ESCWA analysis has revealed a trend towards divergence among member States. Some, such as Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, are successfully enhancing institutional effectiveness, but others are slipping sharply. ESCWA played a central role in monitoring governance in the Arab region in 2014, releasing its Arab Governance Report: Governance Challenges in Countries Undergoing Transition, promoting national dialogue during political transition, and organizing meetings on topics such as the formal and informal institutions of citizen involvement. The report introduced new country-specific indicators for monitoring governance, which were discussed at regional meetings and led to Iraq requesting support for its efforts in institution building.

Participation and citizenship

All citizens should be able to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. In WGI for the region, however, the Arab countries score lowest for “voice and accountability”.

In 2014, ESCWA held a multitude of meetings and consultations with Governments, academics, the media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society on subjects such as national dialogues during transition, refugees and citizen involvement

in the post-2015 development agenda. They led to specific capacity-building exercises with NGOs in Lebanon and various other member States to facilitate work with refugees and political transformation. In the course of the year, ESCWA provided support for institutional reform in Yemen and training for the Arab Institute of Human Rights in Tunis. ESCWA continues to provide advice to the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue with the Common Space Initiative in Lebanon.

Socioeconomic impact of conflict and occupation

Political upheaval, violence, instability and occupation continue to characterize swathes of the Arab region. ESCWA has carried out research on the impact of conflict and instability on development. The Beyond Governance and Conflict: Measuring the Impact of the Neighbourhood Effect in the Arab Region report studies the effect of conflict and other upheavals on neighbouring countries and how to reduce their impact and the likelihood of contagion. Research being conducted with the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) is expected to provide data quantifying the impact of conflict and instability on development in the Arab region.

The Arab region spends almost 4.1 per cent of GDP, more than twice the average for developing countries, on weapons, making it the world’s biggest arms-buying region in relative terms. In 2014, UNHCR noted that, with the flow of refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic into neighbouring countries, the Middle East and North Africa region had overtaken the Asia-Pacific as the main region of origin of refugees worldwide. Of the five countries with the greatest outflow of refugees, three are in the Arab region: the Syrian Arab Republic (almost 3 million), Somalia (1.12 million) and the Sudan (648,900). Of countries hosting the greatest

International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

The General Assembly designated 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. To mark the event, ESCWA undertook various initiatives to raise awareness of the rights and plight of the Palestinian people and explore ways to support Palestinian institutions.

In addition to the annual note of the Secretary-General on the repercussions of the Israeli occupation, ESCWA released a study on the social and economic situation of Palestinian women, commissioned a report on Israeli violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention and organized a seminar on that subject in November 2014.

ESCWA held meetings with NGOs assisting Palestinian refugees in Lebanon in June and November 2014, as a result of which two research projects were initiated with the American University of

Beirut and the Welfare Association. The first will assess the institutional capacities and needs of civic entities supporting Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, while the second will look into the transformation of humanitarian work in Lebanon in the light of the Syrian crisis and the impact on entities supporting Palestinian refugees.

An online campaign about Palestine, "181 Posts", was launched in March 2014. It was followed by the screening of two Palestinian films and photo and handcraft exhibitions held in partnership with Palestinian NGOs, OHCHR and UNRWA. ESCWA participated in the UNRWA Building Solidarity Initiative, under which an iconic photo of a Palestinian refugee school girl was projected on landmark buildings in major cities around the world, and observed the International Day of Solidarity with a ceremony attended by around 200 people.

ESCWA cooperated with a wide array of partners in these efforts, including OHCHR, UNRWA, the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship at the American University of Beirut, the Welfare Association, the Committee for Employment of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, 10 Palestinian NGOs in Lebanon, and independent artists, filmmakers and experts.



number of refugees around the world, two are also in the Arab region: Lebanon (more than 1 million) and Jordan (around 700,000). With 257 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants, Lebanon has the highest ratio of refugees to local population in the world.

ESCWA contributed to the Fourteenth Annual ARADO Conference on Cooperation in Establishing Resilience toward Global Risks in the Arab Region, held in Cairo in December 2014, with research on policy options to mitigate risks in the economy, the environment, public administration and governance, and in infrastructure and social matters.

Resilience to natural and human-made crises

Part of the remit of the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR) is to address the issues of resilience to natural and human-induced disasters, along with corresponding work on disaster risk reduction.

In 2014, the Arab Climate Outlook Forum was established to provide climate outlooks at the regional level. It will get support from the RICCAR Regional Knowledge Hub. Projections of regional climate models and hydrological modelling were completed by the end of 2014 and presented at a meeting of RICCAR experts in Amman in December. ESCWA, in conjunction with the League of Arab States, convened regional workshops on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations in May (Amman) and November (Kuwait). One aim was to build links between future generations of climate change negotiators, in order to facilitate the development of common positions between Arab countries. Challenges facing climate change negotiators were addressed on the basis of the ESCWA Guide on Climate Change Negotiations for Representatives and Negotiators from Arab Countries.

ESCWA is also working with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to promote the Damage and Loss Assessment methodology, which has been applied in more than 60 countries, and build the capacity of member States to use it after conflicts, crises and emergencies.



6. Partnerships

Achieving sustainable development in the Arab region demands a multifaceted approach guided by evidence-based analysis, and aimed at short, medium and long-term goals. Partnership creates vital links, fills gaps and sustains momentum towards those goals.

Under a partnership strategy developed in 2014, ESCWA will work with different partners at various stages of planning and implementation of projects and create support infrastructure for its central initiatives in order to guarantee a comprehensive approach to development challenges. The following illustrates the importance to ESCWA of partnering with different types of organizations.

Government partners

With the backing of the Government of Sweden and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, ESCWA launched a project to boost food and water security in the Arab region by collating targeted national and regional data, designing coordinated regional policies on food and water security, and helping Governments to deal with the problems of dwindling arable lands, increasingly scarce water and rising food needs. ESCWA received support from the Government of Germany for its efforts to promote integrated approaches to water resource management. Germany and Norway were joined by Italy and Finland in 2014 in their support of the “National agenda for the future of Syria” project, which seeks to prepare the way for dealing with the most pressing challenges that will face the country

in post-conflict transition. With help from the United Arab Emirates, ESCWA prepared studies on “smart cities”, e-government service integration and mobile government in the Arab region.

Regional organizations and NGOs

During 2014, cooperation with the Arab Gulf Program for Development (AGFUND) on participatory governance and public sector reform resulted in a training toolkit on Partnership in Democratic Governance. They also set up committees of practice in Iraq and Yemen to promote dialogue and consensus-building between Governments

Multi-stakeholder Commitment to Improving Internet Governance: The Third Arab Internet Governance Forum organized by ESCWA in Beirut

The Arab Internet Governance Forum (Arab IGF) was established in 2012 and modelled on the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) launched by the Secretary-General in 2006. It provides a discussion platform for all players with a stake in Internet policy, including Governments, the private sector, civil society, technicians, academia and regional organizations. ESCWA received input from many organizations for the Third Arab Internet Governance Forum, held in Beirut in November 2014, including: the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers; RIPE Network Coordination Center; the Kuwait Information Technology Society; Ogero and Touch.

and civil society. Partnership with the Pan-Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM) was essential in providing ESCWA with national primary data on population and family health issues, which helped to monitor the well-being of youth in Arab countries. The Arab NGO Network for Development and ESCWA organized a regional forum on social and economic inequality in June 2014, with a view to making sure that a wide range of civil society organizations take part in regional discussions on the post-2015 development framework.

In 2014, ESCWA worked with the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) on a study of the impact of conflict on human development in the Arab countries and the potential impact of conflict over the coming 30 years. ESCWA also joined the Iraqi Business Council to extend the reach of participatory programmes in Iraq through the provision of technical advice and training materials.

The United Nations and intergovernmental organizations

ESCWA plays a leading role in coordinating United Nations policy on the Arab region through the Regional Coordination Mechanism. In December 2014, ESCWA organized a meeting in Beirut on issues ranging from the interplay between humanitarian assistance and development work in times of crisis to regional priorities for the post-2015 development framework.

Partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was crucial in shaping the region's contribution to the post-2015 development agenda. It also enabled ESCWA to provide comprehensive technical expertise on weaving environmental considerations into development policy.

Thanks to its partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), ESCWA was

able to obtain specialized training materials for its International Migration and Development workshop, which was held from 15 to 18 September at the League of Arab States headquarters. Their cooperation was vital in providing substantive input into the Situation Report on International Migration in the Arab Region. Together with the League of Arab States, ESCWA and IOM also co-chaired the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region.

Preparation of the Situation Report was co-sponsored by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which was also a key partner in the organization of the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Heads of National Population Councils in March 2014 and the follow-up meeting convened in November 2014. ESCWA is working with UNFPA on a research project to examine the causes and consequences of child marriage in humanitarian crises.

In addition, ESCWA worked with UN-Women in 2014 to analyse the status of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the Arab region, in preparation for the 2015 Global Report.

The five United Nations regional commissions held the Fifth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development in Tunisia in November 2014, in which they called for national, regional and global cooperation on development of the energy market, improved energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy, access to modern energy supplies, energy security and investment in the energy sector.

Furthermore, ESCWA worked with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to assess the status of digital Arabic content, including its potential as a tool for fostering development, employment and entrepreneurial innovation, and reducing the digital divide. The partnership also bore fruit in the form of a thematic workshop at the

A close partnership: ESCWA and the League of Arab States

The League of Arab States continued to be one of the main regional partners of ESCWA in 2014. They worked together on issues including the Arab Customs Union, preparing the Amman and Sharm el-Sheikh declarations on the post-2015 development agenda and formulating strategies for ending violence against women and promoting the involvement of women in political life.

The two bodies organized key meetings in 2014, including

the Regional Conference on Social Protection as Development, the Regional Conference on Disability Policy, the results of which fed into the publication on Disability in the Arab Region: An Overview, and a migration and development workshop. They also ran meetings with national population councils, which maximized the impact of the capacity-building work of ESCWA on population and development.

ESCWA also forged a tripartite partnership with the Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RCREEE) and the League's Ministerial Council for Electricity in order to streamline capacity-building, policy dialogues, partnerships and awareness-raising efforts.

WSIS+10 high-level event in Geneva in June 2014 and a digital Arabic content competition.

In the area of statistics, the World Bank helped ESCWA to implement the regional component of the International Comparison Program. The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) and the Euro-

Mediterranean Cooperation Programme on Statistics (MEDSTAT III) all assisted ESCWA in strengthening the capacity of its member States to produce reliable statistics.

Finally, with the support of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), ESCWA was able to assist Egypt, Jordan and the State of Palestine in conducting energy consumption surveys.



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