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**PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT-
RELATED ACTIVITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS UNDER ESCWA
PROGRAMME OF WORK SINCE THE SEVENTH SESSION
OF THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Summary

Since the seventh session of the Committee on Social Development, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has implemented a number of planned activities within the framework of Subprogramme 2 of its programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011, which deals with integrated social policies, including activities set out in the recommendations of the Committee on Social Development. Those activities focused on national capacity-building and the provision of advisory services in the area of social development. They also included the preparation of studies, guides and technical references; the implementation of field projects related to social development issues and working with member countries on finding the best ways to design integrated social policies.

This document presents a review of progress made in the implementation of the above activities. It is presented to the Committee on Social Development during its eighth session in order to inform it about such activities and seek its proposals for follow-up on their outcomes.

CONTENTS

| | <i>Paragraphs</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|---|-------------------|-------------|
| Introduction | 1 | 3 |
| <i>Chapter</i> | | |
| I. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE OFFICE OF DIVISION CHIEF | 2-9 | 3 |
| A. Conferences, meetings and workshops | 3-7 | 3 |
| B. Reports, studies and research | 8-9 | 4 |
| II. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE SOCIAL PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT SECTION | 10-30 | 5 |
| A. Guidelines for the implementation of the community and participatory social development approach..... | 11 | 5 |
| B. Capacity-building projects and programmes | 12-14 | 6 |
| C. Experts meetings, workshops and forums..... | 15-19 | 6 |
| D. Reports, studies and publications..... | 20-25 | 8 |
| E. Technical assistance services | 26-30 | 9 |
| III. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE SOCIAL POLICY SECTION | 31-42 | 10 |
| A. Expert group meetings | 32-33 | 10 |
| B. Reports, studies and publications..... | 34-41 | 11 |
| C. Programmes and projects | 42 | 12 |
| IV. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE POPULATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SECTION | 43-51 | 13 |
| A. Reports, studies and publications..... | 44-49 | 13 |
| B. Projects..... | 50 | 15 |
| C. Workshops | 51 | 15 |

Introduction

1. The Social Development Division (SDD) of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is responsible for the implementation of Subprogramme 2 of ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2011-2012. This subprogramme deals with integrated social policies, and aims to strengthen the concept of social policy based on social justice and equal opportunities for all, in accordance with the specificity and cultural sensitivity of the region. SDD attempts to achieve its goals through the following: (a) preparing analytical studies, holding meetings and implementing technical cooperation activities. This includes the organization of workshops, training programmes and field projects, and the provision of advisory services on priority social issues; and (b) calling for the establishment and strengthening of partnerships between stakeholders at the local and national levels, in order to consolidate the participatory development approach, and subsequently formulate suitable social policies which take into consideration the needs of all population groups.

I. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE OFFICE OF DIVISION CHIEF

2. The Office of the Chief of Division carries out the following functions: (a) identifying emerging social issues in the ESCWA region as well as strategic social and economic issues, including the social effects of globalization and the social dimensions of urban development; (b) outlining and drafting a chapter on social development to be included in the annual Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region; and (c) coordinating the Division's inputs with such intergovernmental bodies as the Committee on Social Development, the Economic and Social Council and other decision-making bodies. Following is a review of activities undertaken:

A. CONFERENCES, MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

Arab Forum on Social Policy (United Nations House, Beirut, 28-29 October 2009)

3. The forum was organized in collaboration with the Community Development Authority of the Government of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. Its objective was to achieve the following: (a) Strengthening national capacities for integrating social priorities into public policies, through the identification and dissemination of lessons learned from social policy design, implementation and monitoring in the Arab region and beyond; (b) strengthening dialogue and discussions on the challenges and opportunities for the application of an integrated social policy approach; and (c) considering available options for creating regional networks and knowledge sharing in the long term.

Expert Group Meeting on the Use of Urban Observatories as a Tool for Localizing Urban and Social Policy in the ESCWA region (United Nations House, Beirut, 1-2 December 2009)

4. The meeting was organized in cooperation with the Arab Towns Organization, the Arab Urban Development Institute, and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT). It aimed to review the use of urban observatories within the framework of social and urban policy in Western Asia. During the meeting, a special session was dedicated for the regional launch of the Global Report on Human Settlements 2009 - Planning Sustainable Cities, which was prepared by UN-HABITAT.

Expert Group Meeting on The Global Financial and Economic Crisis: The Social Impact and Response in ESCWA Countries (United Nations House, Beirut, 8 December 2009)

5. The meeting aimed at addressing the global financial crisis from a social perspective. It included a number of regional and international experts, and representatives of United Nations organizations. It

attempted to understand the social impact of the crisis on various countries of the region, with emphasis on poverty, employment, monetary remittances and social protection systems. The meeting issued a number of recommendations about the political response to the crisis and programmes aimed to alleviate its impact on the poor and marginalized groups in the region.

*Inter-Regional Workshop on Social Protection as Development
Brainstorming Workshop Proposal
(Beirut, 28-30 September 2010)*

6. ESCWA organized the workshop in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation. The workshop, which was attended by a number of decision makers, experts and professionals, examined ways to integrate the needs of citizens into the social policy of the State, rather than implementing programmes for the provision of care to the poor and the vulnerable as marginal groups. A number of social protection programmes in selected countries in ESCWA region, Latin America, and Asia and the Pacific were examined in order to identify innovative approaches for the activation of social protection programmes. The workshop also sought to enhance technical cooperation amongst the countries of the South. It included two sessions on social protection in Lebanon and Oman, both of which receive technical support from ESCWA for the reform of social protection programmes.

*Expert Group Meeting on
Bridging the Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region: Towards Inclusive Cities
(United Nations House, Beirut, 25- 26 November 2010)*

7. This meeting discussed issues pertaining to various forms of inequality in urban areas, and provided a platform for knowledge exchange on the experience of central and local governments in addressing inequalities through urban development policies and strategies. It made recommendations to support governments in developing policies and strategies aimed to achieve comprehensive and sustainable urban development.

B. REPORTS, STUDIES AND RESEARCH

*Social Development Bulletin: Impact of the Financial Crisis on Social Development
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/Technical Paper.5)*

8. The bulletin, that was issued by ESCWA within the Social Development Bulletin series, shed light on the social impact of the financial crisis, and on the political and social response in a number of countries in the region. It included the experience of an immigrant who lost his job as a result of the crisis. It also included an interview with the former Lebanese Finance Minister, George Corm, who pointed out to the unequal effects of the financial crisis on the countries of the region, addressing such effects on employment and the role of social protection systems in alleviating them. The Bulletin also highlighted the key outcomes of the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development (New York, 24-26 June 2009).

*Status and Prospects of the Arab City: The Reality of the Contradictions and Differences between
Arab Cities: A Critical Vision against the Backdrop of Selected Urban Patterns
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/8)*

9. The report describes changes witnessed by Arab cities in terms of their economic, social and physical structures. Such structures interact and overlap; their similarities, disparities and advantages translate into various urban forms and patterns. The report addresses three cities, namely Beirut, Cairo and Dubai, as each represents an Arab city undergoing fundamental changes, under the impact of internal subject factors or external factors related to globalized economic relations. Such impact is shaped by the economic, social, cultural and political conditions of communities living in each city. Furthermore, those model cities are

precursors of similar transformations in a number of Arab cities. The report recommends the preparation of a critical study which identifies problems faced by urban development, and the establishment of monitoring and analysis tools. Its objective is to achieve sustainable urban and social development, and implement sound urban governance, based on the principles of citizenry and respect for the political and social rights of individuals and groups.

II. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE SOCIAL PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT SECTION

10. The Social Participatory Development Section is responsible for the achievement of the following objectives: (a) developing an integrated approach for participatory development, and issuing and revising guidelines for implementation taking into consideration feedback received from users; (b) promoting such guidelines through training programmes and modules that respond to the needs of the participants, government institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector and local leaders, and meet the requirements for advisory services; (c) organizing workshops, meetings, discussion panels and e-forums on the national and regional levels to strengthen knowledge patterns, support coordination mechanisms and networks, promote all forms of dynamic participation at all levels, and initiate responsible interactive dialogue; (d) issuing studies, reports and bulletins which facilitate the exchange of expertise. The objective is to support participatory approach in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of development policies and programmes; and (e) offering advisory services to support community development programmes and enhance participation in policy formulation and implementation.

A. GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATORY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Guide on Community Development (revised version) (E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/Technical Paper.8)

11. ESCWA issued a revised version of the Guide on Community Development, based on the discussions and observations of experts and participants during the workshops which were held on the substantive and organizational material contained in the first version of the Guide. The revised version was also prepared in the light of the observations made by community leaders and workers in field projects, in view of the application of the development approach advocated under the Guide, and also in light of the feedback received on its techniques. Observations made by participants in the Expert Group Meeting on Participatory Community Development (Manama, 12-14 October 2009), including representatives of Arab governments, civil society organizations, the academia and media, were also taken into consideration. The revised Guide provides an integrated development approach to help social actors and decision makers manage development processes, based on reliable information and data on problems, possibilities and opportunities. It aims to devise appropriate development plans, improve the utilization of communication techniques, mobilize resources, monitor progress, assess outcomes, and focus on participatory development mechanisms. ESCWA also issued a Guide for the Training of Trainers in Community Development, as a technical reference on training concepts, inputs, basics and methods; in addition to a Technical Reference on Development Planning in the Framework of Community-Based Participatory Research for Community Development in ESCWA Countries. ESCWA also issued a Trainer's Guide for the Workshop on Training workers in Community Development, as a technical reference for the preparation and organization of Workshops with a high degree of effectiveness and efficiency.

B. CAPACITY-BUILDING PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

Capacity-Building Software for Community Development Workers

12. Following the publication of the Guide on Community Development, a training software was developed for community development workers in 2010. It was subsequently tested with a view to revising

its technical content or modifying it in the light of the feedback received from its users. The objective of the software was to provide organizational expertise and technical know-how on the participatory community development approach; build capacities in programme and project management; and raise awareness of the importance of data and information in identifying problems and possibilities for development planning and policymaking. ESCWA organized an orientation programme on technical prerequisites for drafting a preliminary vision for development projects, to be submitted to donors. Related guidelines were used during a training programme which was attended by high officials from Government agencies and civil society organizations in Palestine. Upon revision, the guidelines were posted on ESCWA's web page and made available to participants in capacity-building programmes.

Electronic Programmes on Capacity-Building in the field of Participatory Development

13. ESCWA prepared revised versions of programmes and other technical material related to institutional and individual capacity-building and development in participatory development. They were issued in electronic format, after testing their feasibility as evaluated by beneficiaries. ESCWA also prepared a detailed programme on the Guide on Enhancing Participation Among Governments and Civil Society Organizations in Policy Processes. This programme is expected to be issued after testing its feasibility in a workshop to be held for this purpose.

Participatory Human Development in Post-Conflict Countries

14. During the period 2009-2011, ESCWA has been implementing this project in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen in view of the devastating wars and armed conflicts they experienced which have exacerbated poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, human rights violations, administrative corruption and political instability in those countries. The project aims to strengthen partnerships between governments and civil society organizations in policy design, implementation and monitoring. Following their appointment, focal points from beneficiary countries attended a round table at ESCWA headquarters in Beirut, in 2009. They discussed implementation procedures, starting with a field survey of government agencies and other institutions that are involved in social development and expected to participate in the different project activities. Two workshops for building the capacities of workers were also organized, in addition to another two for building the capacities of trainers in participatory development. Furthermore, three electronic forums were held on participation in public policy processes, the role of media and social integration.

C. EXPERT GROUP MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS AND FORUMS

*Expert Group Meeting on the study entitled
"Comparative Analysis of Civil Society Participation in Public Policy
Formulation in Selected Arab Countries"
(Beirut, 1-2 December 2010)*

15. This meeting was attended by experts from various ESCWA countries, in addition to those responsible for preparing the background papers for the conduct of the comparative analysis in Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen. The meeting aimed to discuss the content of the comparative analysis of the intervention of civil society organizations, by addressing specific cases of direct civil society impact on policy processes. The meeting drew concrete conclusions, including recommendations for strengthening the role of civil society organizations and enabling them to participate effectively in policy processes in member countries.

*Expert Group Meeting on Participatory Community Development
(Manama, 12-14 October 2009)*

16. In cooperation and coordination with the League of Arab States and the Ministry of Social Development in Bahrain, ESCWA held an Expert Group Meeting on Participatory Community

Development. The meeting was attended by experts and representatives from all Arab countries. It aimed to discuss regional and international trends and experiences in the application of the participatory development approach, including the approach adopted by ESCWA, and its related programmes and projects. During the meeting, the community development approach was discussed in accordance with the revised version of the Guide on Community Development, which was prepared by ESCWA in the light of its practical experiences, feedback from the beneficiaries of its programmes, and workers in field projects in different countries. Discussions concluded with concrete observations, which were taken into consideration in the revision of the final text of the Guide on Community Development before its release and subsequent distribution on participants in training workshops and actors involved in development project management.

*Workshops on Building National Capacities in Iraq on Participatory Social Development
(Beirut, 15-20 February 2010)*

17. Two workshops were organized on building national capacities in participatory social development. They were attended by high officials from ministries and local authority institutions; civil society associations; regional and international organizations; community leaders; the academia; media and the private sector in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen. The workshops provided participants with capacities which enabled them to play an active role in development project preparation, implementation, management and coordination. They also allowed coordination and integration between curricula and literature used by government agencies and civil society organizations. The workshops also provided a forum for knowledge sharing and exchange of expertise; and reinforced the positive attitude of participants towards the following: the concept of community development, means to identify problems and possibilities; project design, and plan preparation and implementation with the participation of stakeholders in all activities; in addition to project and plan follow-up and assessment. Based on the experience they have acquired through their participation in ESCWA programmes, a number of participants already took charge of training programmes in their respective countries. Each workshop issued a report on its work and outcomes, along with the observations and recommendations made by participants.

*Resident sub-regional workshops on the "Training of Trainers in the field of
Social Participatory Development"
(Beirut, 27 September - 1 October 2010)*

18. Those workshops were attended by individuals who had participated in the workshops previously organized by ESCWA to train workers in participatory social development. They aimed to strengthen institutional and individual capacities to design training programmes, establish focus groups, and adopt participatory approaches on social development issues and policies. They included intensive training sessions and practical exercises on the following: enhancing the knowledge of participants in relation to the training concepts, methods of implementation, and vital role of participatory approach in social development; assessing the needs of local communities, civil society organizations and government agencies; developing appropriate mechanisms to involve civil society organizations in the development process; improving skills for designing training programmes in accordance with the needs of local communities and training strategies adopted by Governments; promoting knowledge on techniques used for the management, implementation and assessment of training programmes; identifying the different phases of the evaluation process and drafting evaluation reports. The workshops also included intensive sessions on the practical aspects of training techniques and methods. Each workshop issued a report on its work and outcomes, in addition to the observations and suggestions of participants.

*Electronic forums on Participatory Development
(1 July - 30 October 2010)*

19. In the framework of the implementation of the Project on Participatory Human Development in Post-Conflict Countries, ESCWA held three electronic forums during the period from 1 July to 30 October 2010. The forums were attended by some 120 participants and overseen by 2,526 observers. They included 383

interventions and their website was visited by 19,112 guests. The forums provided an opportunity for dialogue and exchange of expertise among interested actors in government institutions, civil society organizations, media, the academia, and regional and international organizations. The forums addressed key issues related to participation in public policies, and the role of media in development and social integration. Based on the interventions of participants, ESCWA distributed three awards to the winners of each forum.

D. REPORTS, STUDIES AND PUBLICATIONS

Report on Electronic Forums on Participatory Development

20. ESCWA prepared a comprehensive report on the outcomes of the discussions which took place at the electronic forums on participatory development, and on suggestions made by participants thereupon. The report included a set of recommendations and lessons learned, in addition to an assessment of the feasibility of such recommendations and technical obstacles to their implementation.

Report on Social Policy Monitoring and Assessment by Civil Society Organizations in ESCWA Member Countries

21. ESCWA prepared this report in order to identify the new trends of civil society participation in social policy follow-up, and to assess related programmes and projects. The report also aimed to determine the effectiveness of civil society participation, and to exchange expertise on both the outcomes of such interventions and obstacles to its development. The report included a presentation on key areas of intervention influencing public policy processes, in addition to practical examples of such interventions and its actors. Areas of civil society interventions include the following: provision of information; exchange of expertise; resource mobilization; social policy prioritization; support for public service programmes; participatory process institutionalization; contribution to reform and democratic transformation issues; and reporting on social issues. The report drew conclusions and identified trends in relation to the activation of monitoring and evaluation processes.

Report on the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in Policy Processes

22. ESCWA prepared this report in order to draw a portrait of civil society in member countries; and to identify conditions affecting the performance of its organizations, factors contributing to the development of their role; and the new trends they are assuming in their intervention. The report addressed the areas of participation of civil society organizations; their impact on public policies which are formulated and implemented by the governments of the region; and the obstacles faced by civil society organizations at the political, legal, social, cultural, managerial and organizational levels. The report presented selected indicators for activating the participation of civil society organizations, most notably: influence over governments; transparency; democracy; networking and institutional capacity-building. The report also gave an overview of the participation of civil society organizations with governments, and suggested specific areas for enhancing their role and their capacity to participate.

Study on Comparative Analysis of Civil Society Participation in Public Policy Formulation in Selected Arab Countries

23. This study is the outcome of a research project conducted by ESCWA on the experience of Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen, in which civil society organizations have launched successful campaigns to contribute to public policy formulation. The research project included four case studies, each pertaining to a member country, and were based on field interviews and desk research conducted within the theoretical and research framework developed by ESCWA. It also included a comparative analysis summarizing the experiences of the four countries, and an analysis of the capabilities of the civil society in the respective

countries and the instruments they use to influence policymaking processes. The study draws important conclusions on the working environment of civil society organizations, their institutional capacity and their future in the Arab region. Based on the comparative analysis, ESCWA organized a regional meeting for experts in civil society, including the authors of the four case studies. During that meeting, the case studies and the comparative analysis were discussed, and suggestions and ideas were provided to improve the findings of those case studies and promote the means to make use of them.

*Social Development Bulletin
Measures Needed for Public Participation in Policymaking Processes*

24. ESCWA issued this bulletin in the context of the promotion of the concept of participation, its implementation mechanisms and the role of stakeholders in its implementation. The Bulletin focused on the role of civil society in consolidating the relationship between governments and citizens, and provided practical examples and useful directives to enhance participation in public policy as a public concern which must not be exclusively addressed by elites at the decision-making level.

*Information Brief
Strengthening Civil Society Participation in Public Policy Processes*

25. This brief aims to shed light on the concept of civil society, encourage its organizations, and support its growing functions and responsibilities. It also aims to review the areas of concern of civil society organizations, factors affecting the evolution of their role in response to recent trends in their intervention, and obstacles preventing such trends from having a significant impact on governmental policies. The brief addressed indicators for activating the participation of civil society organizations in decision-making processes and the required legal frameworks, and suggests a number of areas and issues to be addressed to achieve this objective.

E. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

26. ESCWA responded to requests for technical advisory services submitted by the following entities: (a) Khadija Association for Social Charity, in Yemen, which received technical support including training manuals and programmes, and organizational and substantive material used for the workshops implemented in the province of Ibb from 9 to 29 September 2009; (b) the United Nations Development Programme, in Lebanon, which, received technical and organizational support for capacity-building programmes and training of personnel and trainers in North Lebanon. Under a cooperation agreement with ESCWA, the Commission provided training manuals and programmes; recommended trainers who had participated in workshops previously organized by ESCWA within its capacity-building programme; and provided technical and organizational material previously used for workshops which were held during the period from November to December 2010; (c) The Institute of Technology, in Iraq, which received technical and organizational support to implement the Workshop on Capacity-Building for Workers in Participatory Community Development, held in Baghdad from 9 to 20 March 2010.

27. In coordination with the Ministry of Social Affairs in Saudi Arabia, ESCWA pursued its cooperation with King Khalid Foundation, to provide advisory services and technical support for the implementation of a capacity-building project in the area of participatory development. ESCWA provided technical and organizational assistance, in addition to training manuals, programmes and materials. ESCWA also recommended trainers who had participated in its previous workshops within its capacity-building programmes. Some 12 workshops for building the capacities of social workers, trainers and researchers in participatory development were organized; the workshops were attended by senior staff from governmental agencies and civil society organizations.

28. In response to the request of the Arab Family Organization and the University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, ESCWA provided technical advisory services through its participation in the Conference on Social Policy for Children: Realities and challenges (Sharjah, 17-18 March 2010). During the Conference,

ESCWA submitted a study on the values, objectives and responsibility of social policy. It also participated in the meeting of the committee responsible for drafting recommendations and proposals for follow-up work.

29. In response to the request of the Arab Labour Organization, ESCWA prepared a study on the role of the private sector in social issues. The study was presented and discussed at the Fourth Arab Conference for Human Resources Development: Challenges of Unemployment and Job Creation (Riyadh, January 2011).

30. In response to the request of the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development, ESCWA provided advisory services through its participation in the Conference on the Promotion of the Status of Family in the Contemporary World: Prospects and Challenges (Doha, 27-28 January 2010), in which ESCWA chaired a session, and participated in discussions and in drafting recommendations.

III. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE SOCIAL POLICY SECTION

31. Within the Social Development Division, the Social Policy Section cooperates with member countries and other concerned parties in order to develop a common understanding of integrated social policy in the region. The Section provides support to Governments with a view to devising frameworks and tools for a social policy which enhances social justice, primarily for the poor. The Section is responsible for the following: (a) promoting the adoption of integrated social policy approaches that ensure social justice in the decision-making process; (b) assisting governments in developing a national vision of social policy through an open dialogue with parties concerned; (c) collaborating with member countries in analysing existing social policy gaps and challenges, and formulating policies based on the best international and regional experiences; and (d) identifying suitable mechanisms for the successful institutionalization and monitoring of social policies. The Social Policy Section also assists member countries to achieve people-centred development through the organization of conferences and expert meetings on national and regional levels and the preparation of reports, studies and analytical and field research. Within this context, the following activities have been implemented:

A. EXPERT GROUP MEETINGS

*Expert Group Meeting to Review the Report
Integrated Social Policy: Visions and Strategies in the ESCWA region:
Report III
(Beirut, 24 July 2009)*

32. ESCWA organized this meeting within the preparation of the report entitled “Integrated Social Policy: Visions and Strategies in the ESCWA region: Report III”. The meeting was attended by international and regional experts in social sciences and public policy, in addition to researchers and academics. It reviewed the concept of social policy in ESCWA member countries and means to integrate it into the broader context of economic and social development.

*Peer Review Meeting
For the Evaluation of Issues Raised in the Report:
Integrated Social Policy: Labour Markets and Labour Market Policies in the ESCWA Region: Report IV
(Beirut, 16 July 2010)*

33. ESCWA organized this meeting within preparations for the publication of the report entitled: “Integrated Social Policy: Labour Markets and Labour Market Policies in the ESCWA Region: Report IV”. The meeting addressed the following topics: (a) Labour market structure and employment challenges in the ESCWA region; (b) employment laws and legislation in the ESCWA region; and (c) active labour market policies in the ESCWA region. The meeting was attended by representatives of ESCWA divisions concerned with public and labour market policies. An e-discussion was organized with a view to reviewing and assessing the design of the above-mentioned report on Integrated Social Policy. It was held on 30 November 2010, and was attended by experts in social sciences, public policies and labour market policies.

B. REPORTS, STUDIES AND PUBLICATIONS

*Integrated Social Policy: Visions and strategies in the ESCWA region:
Report III
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/4)*

34. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the perception of social policy in the ESCWA region and its integration into the broader context of economic and social development. It examines the current paths of development in the region, which consist of addressing issues of equity, equality, balanced development, poverty reduction and risk mitigation within national development strategies. The report also examines the nature of the effects of social and economic structures on institutions concerned with social policy. It focuses on the importance of values and traditions in distributing roles and responsibilities among various sectors of society. It emphasizes the need to add social development to the goals of public policy along with the traditional economic growth-related goals. The report draws the following conclusions: (a) the involvement of ESCWA countries in the various dimensions of social policy shows clear patterns; such countries are making ongoing efforts to identify and address gaps at all levels; (b) region-specific changes are witnessed in the distribution of roles and responsibilities among social institutions of the State, the market and civil society; (c) the future of development in the region faces three sets of challenges, including inter-sectoral partnerships, equitable distribution of resources, redistribution and the overall growth of different social sectors. The report concludes that the coordination of the various tools of change will be instrumental for defining development paths in the ESCWA region in the future.

*Working Paper
Social Policy and the State in Comparative Perspective: Tracking Change in Arab countries
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2010/WP.1)*

35. This paper addresses the debate on the role of the State in social affairs. It also examines social conditions prevailing in the Arab region, and raises issues which policymakers in the Arab region might consider to be of importance for discussions on social development.

*Report
Mapping Inequity: Persons with Physical Disabilities in Jordan
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/7)*

36. This report, which is predicated upon a rights-based approach, is aimed to measure the access of persons with physical disabilities in Jordan to education and health services, employment and social protection. It identifies legal, institutional and social obstacles which prevent such persons from fully enjoying their social rights. It also examines how social policies could help lift such obstacles and achieve equal access for persons with disabilities to social services.

*Working Paper
International and Regional Practices Favouring the Inclusion of Persons
with Disabilities in the Labour Market
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2010/WP.4)*

37. This paper surveys policies, programmes and legislation which could enable persons with disabilities to access employment opportunities in selected ESCWA and other countries. It also assesses good practices and recent developments in the provision of employment opportunities to people with disabilities. The paper identifies the areas in which national capacities could be reinforced in collaboration with the parties concerned with the formulation, implementation and assessment of policies aimed to combat discrimination on the basis of disability, with a view to ensuring the participation of persons with disabilities in economic activity in their communities, on an equal footing with others.

Social Development Bulletin
Social Policy and Social Protection: Challenges in the ESCWA Region
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/Technical Paper.10)

38. This publication highlights the main tasks of social policy and its contribution towards achieving social stability by helping people manage life-cycle risks. The Bulletin also provides an overview of challenges facing social protection systems and the roles and responsibilities of various social institutions in the ESCWA region.

Social Development Bulletin
Achieving Social Justice for All
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2010/Technical Paper.2)

39. This issue of the Social Development Bulletin indicates that the progress made in the economic sphere in recent years was not enough to reduce inequality and social exclusion. To the contrary, economic growth has sometimes led to exacerbating such problems and increasing poverty. The bulletin asserts that social justice requires the implementation of integrated and comprehensive policies which respond to population needs, in the context of emerging global challenges and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It also stresses that the promotion of responsible citizenry and equal access to quality social services cannot only be achieved by securing human rights, but also through investment in human capital.

Brochure on
Social Integration in Western Asia
(E/ESCWA/PI/2010/1)

40. ESCWA issued this brochure with a view to submitting it to the forty-eighth session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development (New York, 3-12 February 2010). The brochure stresses the importance of strengthening the concept of social integration. It examines progress made in the region at this level, and sheds light on a number of major activities and projects through which ESCWA has supported the integration of vulnerable and marginalized groups into mainstream society during the past years.

Pamphlet on
Managing Change: Social Policy for Economic Development

41. This pamphlet emphasizes the need for sustainable growth strategies to promote investment in human resources and expanding of social protection. It also stresses the need for a new system of governance, which is compatible with changing social relations in Arab societies, as clearly reflected by development visions and strategies in Arab countries. The pamphlet also highlights the need to come up with a new distribution of responsibilities so as to involve both private and public sectors and enhance government responsibility for ensuring equality and social inclusion.

C. PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

42. In the framework of their cooperation, the regional commissions of the United Nations prepared for a joined project entitled "Strengthening Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific". The project aims to strengthen national capacities in the development of effective policies and programmes for social protection, including the use of innovative tools and approaches to address emerging social challenges. The project focuses on social protection initiatives which could be taken to enhance social protection in Asia and the Pacific; and on the policies, approaches, funding and impact assessment of such initiatives. The project benefits from the accumulated knowledge and experience in such other regions as Africa, Latin America and Western Asia. It also seeks the development of regional information systems for knowledge management, with a view to supporting national initiatives, exchanging experiences, designing capacity-building activities, and documenting innovative practices.

IV. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE POPULATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SECTION

43. Since the seventh session of the Committee on Social Development, the work of the Population and Social Development Section has focused on the following areas: (a) raising awareness of challenges and opportunities posed by demographic transformation, including youth bulge and growth of the elderly population; (b) encouraging countries to face challenges posed by international migration and benefit from opportunities associated with it; (c) monitoring progress made by Arab countries in the implementation of programmes of action approved under international conferences, including the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond; and (d) disseminating knowledge and sharing information related to population and development. The Section has undertaken the following activities:

A. REPORTS, STUDIES AND PUBLICATIONS

Social Development Bulletin
The Effects of the Financial Crisis on International Migration from the Arab Region
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/Technical Paper.6)

44. This bulletin begins with a general overview of the financial crisis and its challenges and opportunities in the region. It then reviews the lessons learned in relation to the effects of previous wars and financial crises on international migration, by addressing three cases: the oil crisis in 1973, the Gulf War in 1990-1991 and the financial crisis in Asia in the late nineties. It also presents the main features of international migration in the Arab region before the outbreak of the crisis, primarily the multiple types of migration; high ratio of expatriates to the total population; sponsorship (*kafalah*) system; growing migration of female expatriates for employment in specific occupations; growing youth demand for migration; transformation of the region into a major sender and recipient of financial remittances; decreased migration opportunities within the region and to Europe; growing concern about the human rights of expatriates and the lack of knowledge on international migration in the region. The bulletin focuses on four anticipated effects of the financial crisis on international migration in the Arab region, namely: higher rates of unemployment; decreased remittances to the region; increased circular migration; and endangered migrants' human rights. It concludes that the financial crisis could increase poverty and social inequity levels, which requires appropriate policies to address the crisis and mitigate its consequences.

Social Policy Brief: International Migration of Youth in Arab Countries (Third issue)
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/Technical Paper.7)

45. This issue addresses youth migration in Arab countries as a major social challenge. It presents factors contributing to youth migration, namely "push factors", which drive young Arabs to leave their country of origin due to prevailing economic, social, cultural or political conditions, on the one hand, and external "pull factors", which are related to globalization and the global demand for labour, on the other hand. Such factors, which are coupled with growing youth proportion in the population of many Arab countries, have raised Arab youth migration rates in recent years, though at varying degrees. According to the brief, youth migration highlights the failures of the development process in most Arab countries, and indicates that such countries are in urgent need of a new development vision which prioritizes youth integration and their broad and effective participation in community development. Adding that Arab countries need to launch a region-wide development project, the brief emphasizes that such new vision will only be achieved with the adoption of a new approach towards the management of international migration streams in the Arab countries, primarily youth migration.

Population and Development Report (Issue no. IV)
Youth in the ESCWA Region: a Study of the Reality and Implications on Development Policies
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/6)

46. This report includes three chapters. The first chapter contains a definition of youth, and a review of contemporary approaches thereto, with a focus on the United Nations approach framed by the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. Chapter II analyses the status of the youth in the ESCWA region in education, employment, health and participation in public life. It examines key indicators within each of these areas, and identifies main challenges facing the youth and reasons for such challenges. Chapter III deals with the implications of development policies and reviews youth policies in ESCWA countries. A number of countries have already formulated national youth policies and strategies, or are currently working on their completion, while most countries address youth issues within sectoral policies (such as education, employment and health), or within national development plans. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the importance of targeting young people as a socio-demographic group which has its own needs and faces its own challenges. It also stresses the need to work on two axes: the first is youth empowerment, and the second is their provision with opportunities to benefit from their potential. The third chapter concludes with an overview of the objectives, targets and indicators which were recently issued by the United Nations within the World Programme of Action for Youth on three axes, namely youth and the global economy; youth and civil society; and youth and their well-being.

Worksheet
National Youth Policies Within the Framework of the World Programme of Action for Youth
(E/ESCWA/26/4(Part I))

47. This key paper, which was presented at the twenty-sixth ESCWA session (Beirut, 17-20 May 2010), reviews questions raised regionally and internationally on the causes of the deterioration of youth conditions, despite development efforts by Governments. One of the reasons identified is the reluctance of most Arab countries to respond to the World Programme of Action for Youth, and their non-compliance with its guidelines which urge countries to accord youth the importance they deserve in the planning process. Therefore, it is essential to critically review the available development approaches towards youth development issues, and find practical solutions which are consistent with demographic, economic and social specificities; and with opportunities and challenges posed by globalization and affecting young people and their performance in their community. The paper emphasizes the importance of dealing with youth issues as indicated under the World Programme of Action for Youth and adopting it as a methodological framework which responds to their status, and also as a highly advanced development approach that is practical, measurable and able to be monitored. In this regard, the paper addresses the principles, pillars and priorities of the World Programme of Action for Youth; aspects which distinguish it from traditional approaches to development; its uses at the national level; and prerequisites for its adoption, by reviewing the outcomes of a survey carried out by ESCWA. The paper also put forward a set of recommendations that could accelerate the response to the World Programme of Action for Youth, and consecrate its approach as a means to ensure youth development.

The Demographic Profile of the Arab countries
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/Technical Paper.9)

48. ESCWA issued this paper in view of the importance of the structural changes associated with population age structure. Given the need for early preparedness and planning, it aims to promote knowledge about the challenges posed by population growth dynamics and by demographic transformations. The paper focuses on transformations in population size, growth and distribution across 22 Arab countries; on decreasing fertility and mortality rates; and on their effects on population age structure in the period 1980-2050. It also addresses international migration in the period 1990-2010, with special reference to labour migration and the demographic and development implications of the youth bulge. Furthermore, it points out to the effects of the financial crisis on youth, the elderly and migrant workers.

49. At the knowledge dissemination level, and in order to complement the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 5-13 September 1994), which stressed the importance of disseminating population data promoting the integration of the population variable into development, ESCWA continues to update the electronic links on the demographic profile of Arab countries and associated social and economic features. Those links provide information on current and future trends of the size and age composition of population; infant mortality rates; life expectancy at birth; and fertility rates. The Population Information Network for Western Asia can be accessed at the following address: <http://www.escwa.un.org/popin>.

B. PROJECTS

Strengthening National Capacities to Deal with International Migration: Maximizing the Development Benefits of International Migration and Minimizing Negative Impact

50. The purpose of this integrated project is to strengthen national capacities by providing and improving quality data on international migration; building institutional and human capacity in policy and programme development and implementation; and promoting regional and international dialogue. Those measures could be taken through the development of a network to exchange information, policies, experiences and best practices. The project is expected to enhance cooperation with other partners, such as non-governmental organizations, the International Organization for Migration, regional development agencies and research centres, in developing knowledge on international migration and its impact on development. The project involves countries which play a major role in migration processes, primarily countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, as receiving countries, and Egypt, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as sending countries.

C. WORKSHOPS

Workshop on International Migration and Development in the ESCWA region: Integrating International Migration into Development Strategies (Beirut, 19-22 July 2010)

51. In the context of the project on Strengthening National Capacities to Deal with International Migration: Maximizing the Development Benefits of International Migration and Minimizing Negative Impact, ESCWA organized this workshop, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration. The workshop attempted to build the required national skills and capacities for the design and implementation of policies and programmes which maximize the development gains of international migration and minimize its challenges. It emphasized the importance of improving the availability of data and information related to migration and its effects on development in the Arab region, and the need to strengthen national expertise in order to achieve the following: (a) identify the areas in which migration impacts development and integrate such considerations into development strategies; (b) define international migration, and identify major legislation and policies related to migration management in both receiving and sending countries; (c) review selected regional initiatives and electronic experiences with regard to the restriction of labour movement between countries and regions, and to circular migration; (d) discuss possible forms of regional cooperation on migration and development. The workshop offered participants the opportunity to understand the current situation of migration and development and to discuss definitions and joint activities, within the framework of global best practices. Participants presented and discussed a series of studies, which make up a regional report on migration and development in the ESCWA region. Those studies focused on the following topics: labour migration; migrants' remittances and their impact on development in the Arab Mashreq countries, namely Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic; cross-country groups and development; brain and talent drain in the Arab Mashreq; and migration policies in ESCWA countries. In an applied fashion which allowed participants to identify related methodologies and models, national reports on migration policies and statistics were presented, and the inclusion of migration into development strategies was discussed.
