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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Committee on Technology for Development
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Item 8 of the provisional agenda

Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 in the field of technology for development

Summary

The present document sets out the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 in the field of technology for development. The work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in this field comes under subprogramme 4 on technology for development and regional integration of the strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019, adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-ninth session (Doha, 13-15 December 2016).

The present document presents the strategy of subprogramme 4 for the biennium 2018-2019, its expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement. It also presents the outcomes and activities proposed by the secretariat to achieve the expected accomplishments, for discussion, comments and recommendations thereon.

CONTENTS

Introduction

1.   The activities set out under the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in the field of technology for development have been prepared with reference to subprogramme 4 on technology for development and regional integration of the strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019, adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-ninth session (Doha, 13-15 December 2016).

2.   The ESCWA Technology for Development Division is responsible for implementing subprogramme 4, via its two sections: the Information and Communications Technology Section and the Innovation Section. Over the biennium 2018-2019, the Division will focus on promoting regional and subregional cooperation on technology for sustainable development in the fields of science, technology and innovation, including information and communications technology, and on assisting member States in coordinating various policies and standards employed in those fields. The present document sets out the proposed outcomes for implementation by the Technology for Development Division.

3.   When proposing those outcomes, the secretariat took into account the significant challenges facing the Arab region, including issues that emerged while implementing the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015 and in 2016.

I. ACTION REQUIRED OF THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

4.   The Committee on Technology for Development is invited to review the proposed outcomes and provide guidelines in that regard to the secretariat, in line with the following two standards: the extent to which those outcomes meet the needs of stakeholders, namely ministries and bodies specializing in technology issues, including information and communications technology, in the Arab region; the extent to which those outcomes contribute to implementing the expected accomplishments of subprogramme 4, taking into account the results of discussions held at the current session.

II. PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2018-2019

Subprogramme 4: technology for development and regional integration

A. OBJECTIVE

5.   The objective of subprogramme 4 for the biennium 2018-2018 is to promote the development, transfer, dissemination and use of technology towards inclusive and sustainable development.

B. EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(a) Strengthened national institutional frameworks on technology for development and innovation	(a) (i) Increased number of policies, strategies and plans on technology for development and innovation
	(ii) Increased number of policies revised to foster technology for development and innovation
(b) Increased regional cooperation to promote technology and innovation for sustainable development	(b) (i) Increased number of established or reinforced institutional bodies and networks, aimed at strengthening regional integration and streamlining technological cooperation
	(ii) Increased number of regional initiatives that promote cooperation in science, technology and innovation
(c) Strengthened national institutional frameworks to facilitate technology transfer	(c) (i) Increased number of member States that participate in initiatives to transfer technology for development and innovation
	(ii) Increased number of member States that develop cross-sectoral plans for the transfer of technology for more competitive economies

C. STRATEGY*

19.33 The Technology for Development Division is responsible for the implementation of subprogramme 4. Technology and knowledge play a major role in the move towards a productive knowledge society. Recent technological advancements have modified the principles of economic growth and affected all economic sectors. The capacity of member States to adapt and contribute to ever-accelerating changes in technology and knowledge varies significantly. With the continued monitoring and implementation of activities pertaining to various sustainable development initiatives, such as the outcome of Rio+20, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), WSIS+10, the ESCWA Regional Plan of Action for Building the Information Society and the Arab Information and Communications Technology Strategy of the League of Arab States, work under the subprogramme will harness the power of technology to help and guide member States in their transitions towards information societies and knowledge-based economies.

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* The paragraphs under this heading ("Strategy") are numbered from 19.33 to 19.35, where 19 indicates programme 19 concerning economic and social development in Western Asia, of the United Nations proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019; and 33-35 reflect the sequential numbering of the paragraphs contained in the document that sets out all the United Nations programmes. This numbering is retained in ESCWA documents on the comprehensive programme of work and the programme of work of each of the seven subprogrammes.

19.34   To meet the development needs of member States, ESCWA will prepare analytical studies with policy recommendations, convene meetings, provide advisory services and implement development projects in partnership with national and regional stakeholders. ESCWA will endeavour to enhance regional collaboration and foster partnerships aimed at harnessing research and development in technology and innovation for socioeconomic development. The various activities undertaken will serve as catalysts for change in national and regional policymaking and will help member States to devise result-driven strategies. They will promote the adoption of comprehensive sets of measurements and indicators aimed at informing strategic decision-making and identifying priority areas of policy action. ESCWA will also rely on feedback from member States and on regional and global benchmarking exercises to assess and revise plans of action, monitor progress and evaluate the impact of technology on national and regional economies. To help the human resources of the region reap the benefits of technology and knowledge advancement, ESCWA will undertake field projects that incorporate a social dimension, seek the active involvement of local communities, pay special attention to the employment needs of young people and advocate the empowerment of women.

19.35   More specifically, the work of ESCWA under the subprogramme will leverage technology to smooth the transition of Arab countries towards the knowledge economy and information society. It will focus on enhancing the competitiveness of technological sectors, creating enabling environments, promoting the development of innovative e-services and advocating the adoption and implementation of new trends in e-government, with a special emphasis on open government initiatives. The ESCWA Technology Centre (Amman) will assist production sectors, universities and research centres in member States to acquire the tools and capabilities necessary to adapt and develop suitable technologies that are critical to solving sustainability challenges. To make information and communications technology (ICT) accessible to all segments of the region's population, ESCWA will work to enhance the ICT infrastructure in member States, implement a regional backbone and promote cheaper access rates to broadband and mobile services.

D. EXTERNAL FACTORS

6.   Subprogramme 4 will achieve its objective and expected accomplishments provided that: (a) the political situation in the region is conducive to socioeconomic development; (b) the security environment does not deteriorate; (c) member States have the capacity and commitment to reorient their economic and social structures and policies; (d) national institutions are willing to provide relevant and timely information; and (e) member States are committed to increasing subregional and regional cooperation and integration.

E. OUTCOMES

7.   Subprogramme 4 for the biennium 2018-2019 is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

    (a)   *Servicing intergovernmental meetings and expert group meetings (regular budget)*

        (i)   Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (thirtieth session)

        Parliamentary documentation:

           a.   Progress in implementing the process of the Arab Internet Governance Forum;
           b.   Report of the Committee on Technology for Development on its first session.

        (ii)   *Committee on Technology for Development*

           a.   Servicing the second session of the Committee on Technology for Development;
           b.   Parliamentary documentation:

               •   Implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017 in the field of technology for development;

- Programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 in the field of technology for development;
- Status of technology for development in the Arab region and the Sustainable Development Goals.

(iii) *Ad hoc expert groups*

Servicing expert group meetings on the following:

a. Implementing strategies on intellectual property rights to promote innovation in the Arab region;

b. Competitive advantage of the information and communications technology sectors in Arab countries to promote the digital economy and regional integration;

c. Implementing the Arab Internet Governance Roadmap, version 2.0 and/or AIGF6 (2018);

d. Implementing the Arab Internet Governance Roadmap, version 2.0 and/or AIGF7 (2019).

(iv) *Assistance to intergovernmental bodies and/or United Nations representatives/ rapporteurs under their established mandates*

Assist the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations in the fields of Internet governance; the Arab domain names system; the digital economy; innovation policies; promoting cooperation; the information and communications technology strategy; science, technology and innovation/information and communications technology for the Sustainable Development Goals; Arabic digital content; and entrepreneurship.

(b) *Other substantive activities (regular budget)*

(i) *Recurrent publications*

a. Technology for Development Bulletin, 2018;
b. Technology for Development Bulletin, 2019;

(ii) *Non-recurrent publications*

a. Strategies to implement intellectual property rights to promote innovation in the Arab region;

b. Promoting innovation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Arab countries;

c. Competitive advantage of information and communication technology sectors in Arab countries to promote the digital economy and regional integration;

d. Increasing productivity and economic growth through technology in the Arab region;

e. Strengthening institutional frameworks towards smart sectors and industry for sustainable development.

(iii) *Booklets, fact sheets, posters, information, newsletters*

    a.   Reference guide on strategies to implement intellectual property rights in the Arab region;
    b.   ISDEHAR programme and partnership systems;
    c.   Information bulletin on the Arab Internet Governance Roadmap 2.0 and Forum 2.0;
    d.   Leaflet on the Arab Digital Agenda;
    e.   Booklet on open government in the Arab region
    f.   Chart on open government in the Arab region.

(iv) *Technical material*

    a.   Guidance on policies to promote a shift towards the digital economy and smart societies;

    b.   Technology entrepreneurship: opportunities and obstacles for Arab youth and women.

(v) *Contributions to joint outcomes*

    a.   Outputs and activities of the joint expert group representing agencies specialized in information and communications technology;

    b.   Report of the Commission of Science and Technology for Development.

<u>Annex</u>

LEGISLATIVE MANDATES

Subprogramme 4. Technology for development and regional integration

General Assembly resolutions

68/198	Information and communications technologies for development
68/209	Agricultural technology for development
68/220	Science, technology and innovation for development
68/302	Modalities for the overall review by the General Assembly of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society
68/310	Four one-day structured dialogues on possible arrangements for a facilitation mechanism to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies
69/204	Information and communications technologies for development

Economic and Social Council resolutions

2014/27	Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society
2014/28	Science, technology and innovation for development
2014/35	Establishment of an intergovernmental committee on technology for development in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
2015/27	Science, technology and innovation for development

ESCWA resolutions

294 (XXVI)	Establishment of the ESCWA technology centre
306 (XXVII)	Development of the Arab Internet Governance Forum process and sustaining efforts in the Arabic domain names field
315 (XXVIII)	Establishing an intergovernmental committee on technology for development

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