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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

REPORT

MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD OF THE PUBLICATION "BEYOND 2015: THE FUTURE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT AGENDA—A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE" BEIRUT, 8-9 NOVEMBER 2012

Summary

As a contribution to the post-2015 debate, the Social Development Division of ESCWA organized a meeting of the advisory board of the joint publication, *The Future United Nations Development Agenda Beyond 2015* on 8 and 9 November 2012 at United Nations House in Beirut. The meeting, which reviewed the draft chapters of the report, brought together representatives from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ESCWA, and the three regional commissions in Africa (ECA), Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) which have contributed to drafting chapters of the report, in addition to prominent resource persons.

The opening session included an overview of the ongoing global consultations on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda, followed by four thematic sessions which corresponded to the main chapters of the report. These were: (i) a historical perspective on the current MDG agenda; (ii) a review of progress in the implementation of MDGs; (iii) key global and regional priority development issues beyond 2015; and (iv) the way forward: conclusion and recommendations.

At the conclusion of the presentations and discussions, recommendations were made on how to improve the content of the different chapters while ensuring that the report maintained an integrated, inter-regional approach. Participants provided overall guidance including a general structure for the final chapter. The meeting concluded with an agreement among participants on a clear timeframe to ensure the submission of the report to the United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB) and the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda by March 2013.

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Introduction

1.   As part of the post-2015 debate, where the United Nations system will be expected to make recommendations on ways to advance the development agenda, ESCWA is leading the preparation of a report entitled Beyond 2015: *The Future United Nations Development Agenda*, in cooperation with three other regional commissions for Africa (ECA), Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The report seeks to provide a regional perspective to the global debate on future development priorities, and present an integrated regional approach to the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda. Each of the commissions contributed to the preparation of the draft report, either by taking the lead in producing a specific chapter or by providing input and feedback to fine tune the content of the various chapters.

2.   Each of the four regional commissions contributing to the report has nominated two advisory board members known for their expertise and knowledge of the issues discussed. The advisory board also includes representatives from the concerned regional commissions and other United Nations entities.

3.   This meeting of the advisory board, held on 8 and 9 November 2012, sought to discuss and review three draft chapters of the report and providing feedback for improvement. The outcomes of the discussions will constitute a framework for the concluding chapter, which will highlight the critical implementation mechanisms for the future United Nations development agenda, in addition to presenting the recommendations of the report.

4.   The meeting was structured around four thematic sessions that corresponded to the four main chapters of the report. Each of the three first sessions included an overview of the chapter being discussed, presented by the concerned commission or resource person. On the second day of the meeting, a fourth session was dedicated to brainstorm recommendations and conclusions to be addressed in the final chapter.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.   The meeting participants agreed on a number of recommendations proposed during the thematic sessions as well as at the closing session. Set forth below is a list of general recommendations as well as recommendations specific to each of the chapters of the report:

A. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

6.   The following general recommendations were agreed upon:

        (a) An introductory chapter will be added to the report, setting the tone for the publication; explaining its rationale; and providing an overview of the history of development challenges in each region. This chapter should also introduce issues which will be returned to in the conclusion;

        (b) Definitions of regions and sub-regions in the report should correspond to those used by the regional commissions. In particular, Sub-Saharan Africa should be replaced by Africa excluding North Africa;

        (c) Overlaps between chapters should be smoothed, while synergies could be maximized where applicable—for example, with regards to the goals informing the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); the outcomes of the implementation process; and setting future priorities. Although the chapters were developed independently from one another, some commonalities emerged, such as the issue of inequality, whether between low- and high-income groups, or between urban and rural areas. These commonalities can be used to focus on priority issues;

(d)   A central priority remains the identification of a vision and priorities for the future development agenda, rather than the specification of its goals. In additions, there is a need to agree on how to prioritize issues and whether those issues that cut across chapters—for example, inequality—should be seen as priorities or as issues to be mainstreamed;

(e)   There is a need to identify avenues of influence the report can have on global processes, such as the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (HLP) and the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on the Sustainable Development Goals (OWG), and meaningful national and regional consultations. There is also a need to fully engage civil society actors and the private sector in the process of formulating the future development agenda;

(f)   It is important to engage in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) process as soon as possible, to ensure the social development angle of sustainable development is not lost, and to clarify the relationship between the SDGs and the post-2015 agenda;

(g)   It is important to note that the regional dimension is not reflected in all chapters; this should be remedied by the author regional commissions in their respective chapters, in close collaboration with the other commissions;

(h)   It was agreed that ESCWA will take the lead in revising the draft chapters, with input received from the original authors of chapters 2 and 3. For this purpose, advisory board members who were not able to attend the meeting were encouraged to send their written comments to be incorporated;

(i)   ESCWA will prepare the introduction and the fourth chapter of the report. In addition, ESCWA will prepare an executive summary upfront, to be signed by all executive secretaries of the regional commissions;

(j)   A revised draft of the report will be made available by 31 December 2012. The main recommendations of the report will be submitted in March 2013 to Chief Executive Board (CEB), accompanied by a launching ceremony in New York if resources permit. Those main recommendations will also be submitted to the HLP by April 2013;

(k)   It was agreed that names of chapter authors, readers and contributors will be mentioned in the publication's acknowledgements;

(l)   The report will be published in English and will not be translated by ESCWA. However, regional commissions are free to translate the text into other languages as they deem appropriate and as resources permit.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO CHAPTER 1

7.   The following specific recommendations were made in relation to chapter 1 of the report:

(a)   It would be useful to tone down the criticism of the MDGs and highlight some of their strengths and milestones. A discussion of the reasons why these MDGs were not achieved would be useful;

(b)   The chapter should separate the process leading to the Millennium Declaration from the process leading to the MDGs, and should elaborate on the process of expansion of targets that the MDGs have undergone;

(c)   The chapter should discuss the expansion of the development agenda beyond measures of economic development and deprivation to include measures of wellbeing, quality of life, improved livelihoods and democratic governance;

(d) It would be useful to add a section or a box on the specific development challenges of each region and the effectiveness of the MDGs in meeting those challenges;

(e) Either this chapter or the introduction should identify the areas of concern to each region which need to be reflected in the post 2015-agenda, including the need for structural transformations and a road map for implementation. This should be further developed in chapter 4 of the report.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO CHAPTER 2

8.   The following recommendations were specifically made with regards to chapter 2 of the report:

(a) The structure of this chapter needs to be revised to include a section that reviews what was achieved and the progress in implementation at the global and regional levels. To the chapter should also include an elaborated section on lessons learned, in particular with respect to measurement issues;

(b) The chapter should highlight the experience with the monitoring frameworks at the regional level and further emphasize the impact of MDGs on strengthening the statistical capacity of countries in collecting, producing and using data;

(c) It would be useful to adopt a disaggregated perspective when examining the MDGs experience to determine which goals and indicators were achieved and why; what mechanisms were efficient; and what would be relevant for the post-2015 agenda;

(d) Inequality is an important issue and needs to be given a central role in the new framework;

(e) The revision of this chapter was to be implemented by the author while ESCWA would incorporate written comments, and ECA colleagues will refine chapter 3 to better reflect issues that arose in chapter 2.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO CHAPTER 3

9.   Below are specific recommendations made in relation to chapter 3 of the report:

(a) In order to make the table on priorities less visually challenging, it was agreed to narrow down the list of priorities and include two additional tables: one highlighting commonalities and another one showing areas of divergence;

(b) It would be useful to have a section on governance or enablers that would include issues of resource mobilization, regional partnerships, management of regional commons, and regional accountability, among other issues;

(c) The section on unemployment needed to be strengthened, given that it is a cross-cutting issue of great significance;

(d) It is worth looking into and defining the issue of inclusiveness, for although it was pointed to on numerous occasions as a priority issue for the regions, there seems to be no agreement on the meaning of the term;

(e) As noted in section C above, the chapter should better reflect issues discussed in chapter 2.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO CHAPTER 4

10.   The following recommendations were specifically made in relation to chapter 4 of the report:

(a) It was recommended that this chapter should summarize the main findings of the previous three chapters; add a section on institutional mechanisms for regional cooperation; and identify a few key messages to inform the global debate on the post-2015 development agenda;

(b) An effort should be made to demonstrate the value-added of this report, and why the regional level is critical to the overall development agenda;

(c) Relevant implementation mechanisms and the role of regional consultations need to be further discussed in this chapter, in addition to exploring the role of new donors;

(d) The regional agenda should be about developing region-specific indicators and enablers (such as regional institutions) to reflect the particular concerns of the different regions within the context of the identified global goals;

(e) There is agreement among all regional commissions on the addition of employment, inequality and social protection as key elements of the future development agenda;

(f) It would be useful to highlight aspects of accountability, transparency and democratic governance as key issues of the future development agenda;

II. DISCUSSION TOPICS

11.   The meeting was organized in four thematic sessions that correspond to the main chapters of the report, namely (i) a historical perspective on the current MDG agenda; (ii) a review of progress in the implementation of MDGs; (iii) key global and regional priority development issues beyond 2015; and (iv) the way forward: conclusion and recommendations.

A. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

12.   Ms. Naela Haddad, ESCWA, presented chapter 1 of the report, entitled "A historical perspective on the current MDGs agenda", on behalf of Ms. Sahar Rad, who drafted the chapter but was not able to attend the meeting. This chapter provides a critical review of the historical context within which the MDGs agenda was set out. It discusses the policy debates that accompanied the formulation of the MDGs and the identification of targets. The chapter also examines the rationale of the MDGs agenda against the prevailing development needs of the 1990s and the dominant policy discourse at the time, and provides a critical assessment of how representative the MDGs were of the priorities of the developing countries and how effective they were in advancing the human development agenda.

13.   In her presentation, Ms. Haddad highlighted milestones in the evolution of the MDGs, stressing the significance of MDGs in forging new global partnerships to tackle key development challenges and in focusing resources and international attention to address those challenges. She then reviewed the main strengths and weaknesses of MDGs in terms of concept, format and implementation. She also discussed the basis for a different approach to development, noting that a more comprehensive strategy is needed to take into account the political, economic, social and environmental structures and priorities in different countries and regions. She suggested this could be achieved by examining the historical processes and circumstances that gave rise to the MDGs. Ms. Haddad presented highlights of the chapter that were deemed significant to the discussion. She noted that the global political environment, the prevailing economic conditions, and the development doctrines and dominant policy packages at the time constituted key factors in shaping the development of the MDGs. Ms. Haddad concluded her presentation by emphasizing some key elements for a post-2015 development agenda. She stressed that a future development agenda needs to consider four key dimensions, namely inclusive economic and social development, environmental sustainability, and peace and security from a regional perspective that links the global development agenda to national and regional implementation, and which involves a broader range of stakeholders.

14.   Following the presentation, participants made a number of observations, noting the need to soften the critical tone of the chapter, in order to align it with the other chapters. The MDGs should be considered as an evolving package of priorities to guide national development, rather than ends in themselves. It was also noted that the chapter is valuable because of the historical assessment of how the changes came about. However, the chapter should point more clearly to the process of expansion of targets that the MDGs have undergone.

15.   Some participants also argued that it could be useful to focus on disaggregation and provide a brief overview of each region, the contributions of the MDGs in each region, their successes and failures with regards to boosting development, and some indication of the difference they made. In fact, MDGs were instrumental in attracting ODA in Africa but not in Latin America, where the agenda was perceived as neglecting regional priorities such as education. Participants also noted that MDGs are currently focused on deprivation and measurement of economic development, but not other key dimensions of human development. As a result, the chapter should discuss the expansion of the future development agenda to include human wellbeing, inequality and governance issues.

B. REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION

16.   During the second session of the meeting, Ms. Harumi Shibata, ESCAP, presented chapter 2 of the report entitled "Review of progress in implementing MDGs". The chapter examines progress in the MDGs implementation from different angles. Besides the traditional method used to assess the MDGs in terms of equality, the chapter evaluates the implementation of the MDGs agenda by looking at the progress in accelerating the implementation of goals and targets. The chapter also discusses the influence of the MDG framework on policy debates and priorities, and concludes with a comparative overview of case studies on MDGs implementation in different regions.

17.   In her presentation, Ms. Shibata noted that regular assessments of the progress in implementing MDGs and the likelihood that they will meet their targets have been used to monitor and report on MDGs at the global, regional and national levels. The results of those assessments reveal that although impressive improvement was made towards achieving Goal 1 at the global level, progress has been slow in achieving other goals and targets, such as those pertaining to maternal mortality and the living conditions of slum dwellers. Progress was also unequally distributed across regions, subregions and countries as well as between different population groups in a given country. Ms. Shibata stressed that monitoring MDGs at an aggregated level could mask disparities at lower levels, and that the MDGs tend to bypass the most disadvantaged groups within a nation. Thus while the target on improved drinking water has been achieved at the global level, the African continent and Western Asia are not likely to meet this target by 2015. Similarly, monitoring MDG progress at the regional level could disguise inter-country disparities. As a result, focusing on targets without adequately addressing the issue of inequality could eventually impede accomplishments at the global level.

18.   Ms. Shibata also briefed participants on the acceleration method as a tool to assess MDG progress, and explained that although this method was not universally acceptable, it is being used to depict acceleration in progress wherever progress in meeting the targets is classified as slow. With reference to the policy influence of the MDG agenda, Ms. Shibata stated that the MDGs have had an enormous impact on the global development discourse, as evidenced by an increased proportion of international official development assistance and other capital flows allocated to social infrastructure and services. In addition, the MDG framework underscored the vital role of the regional dimensions of development by promoting regional integration initiatives and other forms of intra-regional cooperation. At the national level, countries have adapted the MDG framework to their national contexts, adjusting their priorities, policy planning and implementation initiatives accordingly, as well as their budget commitments. Ms. Shibata concluded her presentation by emphasizing the impact of MDGs on monitoring and evaluation, noting that progress has been made in improving the capacity of countries to produce and disseminate reliable and timely data.

This has been supported by an increased commitment on the part of various actors to evidence-based policy making.

19.   During discussions, participants noted that, given a certain general focus on the global importance of the MDG agenda, this chapter should highlight experiences with the monitoring frameworks and whether they were useful at the regional and national levels. In addition, it was agreed that inequality should be given a central role in the new framework, especially for middle-income countries interested in tackling inequality, instead of poverty per se. Another issue that needs to be further emphasized is the strengthening of the statistical capacity in collecting, producing and using data to track progress and inform evidence-based policymaking. In that respect, regional commissions were deemed best-placed to examine the successful experiences of different countries in the governance of data collection and use. Participants also discussed the need to explore alternative measures of progress that would highlight successes that had thus far gone without recognition. They agreed that acceleration of progress is an interesting measurement, as it can show how countries have progressed in relation to their own histories, rather than global trends. In the same context, participants stated that a disparity measure would also be relevant to assess the order of magnitude of the existing gap. Looking at the degree to which countries are off track will help to determine what should be done at the regional level.

20.   Focusing on lessons learned, participants argued that it would be useful to examine the MDGs experience from a disaggregated perspective in order to determine and explain successes and failures, and develop a more refined understanding of what is needed post-2015. In this context, it should be noted that some targets and goals are not relevant at the national level. In addition, mechanisms that have worked should be continued, and those which have not should be discontinued. Participants also stressed the need to study the order of magnitude of failures to assess the extent to which they really were failures, noting that some indicators are set at the level of input, which renders them more achievable than those determined by the level of output. At the end of the discussions, participants agreed that the section on lessons learned in this chapter should be further elaborated to include an assessment of areas of success and failure and issues requiring further investigation, particularly with respect to quality of measurement of progress. This would form the basis of the subsequent chapter.

C. KEY GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES BEYOND 2015

21.   The third session of the meeting consisted of a presentation by Mr. Bartholomew Armah, ECA, on chapter 3 of the report entitled Key Global and Regional Priority Development Issues Beyond 2015. The chapter examines the socio-economic and political context of a new global development agenda, and highlights the main elements of a post-2015 agenda as they have emerged from the various consultations at the global and regional levels. The chapter proposes a set of regional priorities identified from inputs and analysis provided by all four regional commissions, and highlights some commonalities and differences between them.

22.   Mr. Armah opened his presentation by asserting that a broad agreement exists that the post-2015 development agenda needs to recognize and integrate regional and national priorities while being consistent with the outcome of Rio+20. He then provided an overview of the political, economic and environmental contexts of the post-2015 agenda, underlining prevailing issues such as the financial and food crises; high unemployment and especially youth unemployment; high levels of absolute poverty; increasing youth populations; high inequality between and within countries; increased urbanization; and a spike in severe natural disasters related to climate change. Based on a review of the outcomes of consultations and deliberations facilitated by regional commissions in different venues, Mr. Armah presented a compilation of regional priorities for sustainability across four dimensions, namely society, the economy, the environment, and governance. With respect to society, education, health, gender equality and social protection were identified as priorities in all four regions. Other commonalities were also identified, such as inclusive growth, employment, international governance, and urban growth. Mr. Armah went on to discuss variations in social and economic challenges, noting that the best progress in poverty reduction was achieved in East

Asia, while Lain America is more deeply integrated into the global economy than Africa or Western Asia. He also noted that 11 of the countries in Asia and the Pacific are at the highest risk for environmental disasters and eight of the countries in Africa are considered to be the most vulnerable, while Latin America is the most highly urbanized of the four regions. Mr. Armah concluded his presentation by emphasizing that despite the regional commonalities noted, the different circumstances of each region imply variations in post-2015 agendas, requiring a nuanced approach to implementation. He also suggested that structural transformations are critical to the economic sustainability of the regions. Finally, he emphasized the importance of good practices and of sharing the important lessons learned across the regions, offering as examples the experience of Latin America in social protection, and the experience of East Asia in inclusive growth.

23.   During the discussions, participants agreed that, in general, the priorities presented in chapter 3 are consistent with regional priorities. However, in light of the anticipated comparative advantage of the report, there is need to focus on key striking issues that could be attractive to national Governments and that would give the report a distinctive voice. Thus, it was suggested that the long list of priorities in the report be narrowed down, and that a new table be added to emphasize common priorities across regions. It might also be useful in this context to reflect the different weighting of priorities across the regions, while keeping in mind that different regions do not necessarily have different priority issues but rather place different emphasis on particular issues. In this context, it is important to underscore those priorities intended to address the concerns of countries that did not see the MDGs as relevant to their situation. Participants suggested that at least one of the four pillars identified in the framework put forward by the UNTT report on the post-2015 agenda1 could be better adapted to regional contexts. For example, the pillar on peace and security could be replaced by a bubble on governance that would include peace and security alongside other issues. Alternatively, some issues mentioned in the structure, such as institutions and governance, could be considered as enablers throughout the framework. In addition, it is important to define the concept of governance within the framework and determine whether it refers to democratic governance or the public administration and institutional dimension of governance.

24.   Participants also stressed the need to highlight the regional dimension, by considering global goals that could be adapted at the regional level, or by making targets region-specific. More consideration is needed on the management of water resources and other environmental sustainability issues that require a regional response, as well as on the kinds of partnerships needed to address those issues. In this context, participants suggested adding a section to provide a deeper assessment of MDG8, in order to highlight the role of regional cooperation and regional partnerships. This section would include regional financial institutions that can provide resources, as well regional platforms that can host consultations. This section would include issues such as regional public goods and the ownership and management of regional commons, regional accountability, south-south cooperation, and the role of existing regional institutions. Other issues that participants saw the need to emphasize either in this chapter or in the conclusion were unemployment and the democratic governance issues emerging from the Arab uprisings.

D. THE WAY FORWARD

25.   The fourth and final thematic session of the meeting drew together the main findings of the three substantive chapters of the report, through a presentation delivered by Mr. Terry McKinley, University of London, who is to draft chapter 4. The presentation introduced the main ideas, policy proposals and recommendations of the concluding chapter, with a focus on the regional dimension of the future development agenda. The chapter would also address critical implementation mechanisms for the post-2015 agenda.

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[1]   UNTT (2012). *Realizing the Future We Want for All*. Report to the Secretary General. New York.

26.   Mr. McKinley began his presentation by providing a historical perspective on the MDGs which evolved as a clear and compact set of goals and targets aimed at achieving human development through motivating policy change and boosting ODA. Mr. McKinley argued that although MDGs constituted an improvement over the previous framework of structural adjustment, they were criticized for having focused on poverty while overlooking inequality, environmental sustainability and social protection and for lacking strategic policy guidance. He stressed that the joint regional report should propose ways of addressing the lack of ownership and flexibility of MDGs at the regional level, stating that the MDGs were formulated without engaging national and regional stakeholders, including civil society, and without considering the varying initial levels of human development across countries. Mr. McKinley asserted that not all major principles endorsed in the Millennium Declaration were embodied in the MDGs, probably due to some inherent difficulties in translating universal principles into goals and targets. Nevertheless, a practical framework must be maintained, with concrete and transparent goals, targets and indicators that focus on priority outcomes and that aspire to at least average levels of human development. In this context, there appears to be a broad consensus on addressing inequality and employment issues within the post-2015 framework, especially youth unemployment. Indeed, the uneven progress in implementing MDGs across countries and regions has been to the result of unequal income distribution and assets at the national level, as well as unequal structural relations at the international level.

27.   Mr. McKinley emphasized that the central challenge for the joint publication is to tailor global goals and targets to varying regional conditions and aspirations and to determine the crucial region-specific development challenges that need to be highlighted. In this respect, he questioned whether goals in the post-2015 framework should be different, or whether different starting points taken into account for each region, given their different demographic trends, levels of inequality, security concerns, and propensities for food and financial crises. He also underscored the need for regional mechanisms to be put in place that would address regional challenges, promote regional coordination, mobilize regional resources, and provide platforms for regular consultations. He concluded his presentation by discussing whether new transformative policy changes would be required post-2015, in light of the prevailing priority challenges. He also asked whether addressing global and regional challenges would require increased policy space and flexibility at the regional level, or whether a high level of prescriptive policy coherence at global, regional and national levels would be more desirable.

28.   Participants agreed that chapter 4 needs to identify and define the region-specific dimension of priority-setting and how it can be implemented. Thus, some sort of regional agenda needs to be incorporated in the global agenda. In fact, a regional agenda would offer the added value of regional assessment and would facilitate the management of regional public goods. This agenda would also emphasize the role of the regions and regional consultations in identifying priority issues, developing implementation mechanisms, and mobilizing resources. In this manner, new regional implementation mechanisms could be put in place, such as a regional labour market, while existing mechanisms could be strengthened, such as the regional coordination mechanism supported by the African Union.

29.   In addition to being a useful forum for sharing experiences, a regional agenda would act as an intermediary between national and global levels. As such, regional institutions would help synthesize experiences and information, and filter out issues that are best considered at the global level. Since the future development agenda is likely to focus on global goals that could be better adapted to regional and national contexts, participants stressed the importance of having enablers linked to regional initiatives, so that regional institutions can play a more active role in the global development agenda. In addition, participants asserted the need to add social protection as a key element of the future development agenda, which would introduce the issues of employment, poverty and inequality. Participants also stressed the need for the new agenda to highlight aspects of accountability, transparency and governance, which in many instances are thought to have hindered the implementation of the targets and exhausted aid resources. Participants asserted that an important message that needs to be included in this chapter is rescuing the role of public policy in achieving development, and learning from past experiences.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. VENUE AND DATE

30.   The meeting of the Advisory Board of the publication "Beyond 2015: the Future United Nations Development Agenda" was held at the United Nations House in Beirut on Thursday and Friday, 8 and 9 November 2012.

B. OPENING

31.   Mr. Frederico Neto, Director, Social Development Division, gave the opening address welcoming experts and participants from different United Nations entities and regional commissions. He outlined the goals of the meeting and its expected outcomes, and stressed the importance of the joint report in communicating the distinctive issues of the regions to the post-2015 global debate.

32.   Ms. Diana Alarcon, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), presented an overview of the ongoing global consultations on the post-2015 development agenda. She introduced the United Nations System Task Team (UNTT) report, Realizing the We Want for All, highlighting the need for and the key elements of the new agenda. Ms. Alarcon briefed participants on the process, which had involved 60 entities of the United Nations system working towards proposing this first set of recommendations on the contours of the post-2015 development agenda, which would also serve as a reference for future consultations. Building on lessons learned from the MDGs and in light of today's global challenges, the UNTT report emphasizes a future development agenda centered on three fundamentals, namely respect for human rights, equality and sustainability. Ms. Alarcon discussed the UNTT framework organized along four interdependent dimensions, namely inclusive social development, inclusive economic development, environmental sustainability, and peace and security, which are accompanied by a core set of development enablers aimed at guiding policy coherence without being overly prescriptive. She emphasized that the new agenda should avoid being overloaded, overly prescriptive or donor-centered, while envisioning a long-term horizon for transformational changes to take place. Ms. Alarcon also briefed participants on the outcomes of Rio+20, which included launching an inclusive intergovernmental process to formulate sustainable development goals (SDGs), noting that these should go hand-in-hand with the post-2015 agenda. Ms. Alarcon concluded her presentation by outlining milestones towards the formulation of the post-2015 agenda, including intergovernmental processes, future work streams, and a large number of consultations on the way forward.

33.   Ms. Naela Haddad, ESCWA, presented the context and objectives of the joint report in addition to introducing the objectives of the advisory board meeting. She briefed participants on the initiation, scope and context of the joint regional report that would feed into the ongoing development debate on the post-2015 agenda. She noted that the thematic report aims primarily to provide a regional perspective on the elements of the global agenda, in addition to bringing additional stakeholders and targets into the implementation processes and revisiting the monitoring methodologies. Ms. Haddad also provided an overview of the structure of each chapter and its content, in addition to the methodology used in drafting the report and the respective roles of the regional commissions and advisory board members.

C. PARTICIPANTS

34.   The meeting was attended by representatives of DESA and the regional commissions which contributed to the joint report, namely ESCWA, ECA, ECLAC, and ESCAP, in addition to the expert responsible for drafting chapter 4. A list of participants is contained in annex I of this report.

D. AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

35.   The organization of work is contained in annex II of this report.

E. DOCUMENTS

36.   A list of documents for the meeting is available in Annex III of this report as well as on the ESCWA website at: http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=1962E.

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

<u>Thursday 8 November</u>

9:30-10:00	**Opening Session**

ESCWA welcoming address
Presentation on the ongoing global consultations on the post-2015 development agenda (DESA)
Presentation of the context, objectives of the Report, and objectives of the Advisory Board Meeting (ESCWA)

10:30-12:30	**Session 1: Historical perspective**

Chair: ECLAC
Presenter: ESCWA

10:30-11:00	Presentation
11:00-12:00	Discussion of main ideas in chapter I
12:00-12:30	Wrap-up and the way forward on the post-2015 development agenda

13:30-15:30	**Session 2: Review of progress in implementation**

Chair: ESCWA
Presenter: ESCAP

13:30-14:00	Presentation
14:00-15:00	Discussion of main ideas in chapter II
15:00-15:30	Wrap-up and the way forward on the post-2015 development agenda

<u>Friday 9 November</u>

9:00-11:00	**Session 3: Key global and regional priority development issues beyond 2015**

Chair: ESCAP
Presenter: ECA

9:00-9:30	Presentation
9:30-10:30	Discussion of main ideas in chapter III
10:30-11:00	Wrap-up and the way forward on the post-2015 development agenda

11:30-13:30	**Session 4: The way forward**

Chair: ECA
Presenter: ESCWA

11:30-12:00	Presentation
12:00-13:00	Discussion of main ideas in chapter IV
13:00-13:30	Wrap-up and the way forward on the post-2015 development agenda
13:30-14:30	Wrap-up and closing remarks

<u>Annex III</u>

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Symbol	Title
E/ESCWA/SDD/2012/WG.2/INF.1	Information note
E/ESCWA/SDD/2012/WG.2/L.1	Organization of work