

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/S-6/17/Report
24 January 2020
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

**Report****Sixth special session
Amman, 21-22 December 2019****Summary**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its sixth special session in Amman on 21 and 22 December 2019. The agenda contained several items on regional and global issues, including financing for development in 2019; the Belt and Road Initiative in the Arab region; social protection reform in Arab countries; and the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation and coping mechanisms of the Palestinian people. The Commission considered the regional review and assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, regional and global developments in climate change, and the Sustainable Development Goals Monitor. The Commission also considered requests from Algeria and Somalia for ESCWA membership.

At the close of its sixth special session, the Commission adopted two resolutions for submission to the Economic and Social Council for its consideration, in addition to recommendations on the agenda items discussed. The present report sets out the two resolutions and the recommendations, and summarizes discussions under each agenda item.

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Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its sixth special session pursuant to rule 1 (d) of the ESCWA rules of procedure. This present report summarizes the work of the session, held in Amman on 21 and 22 December 2019.

I. Issues for consideration by the Economic and Social Council

2. At its fourth plenary session, held on 21 December 2019, the Commission adopted the following two resolutions for submission to the Economic and Social Council for its consideration.

Resolution 335 (S-VI) Programme Plan of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia for 2021

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recognizing the importance of following up on and keeping pace with the ongoing reforms of the United Nations, the need to respond to rapidly changing development priorities in the Arab region, and the necessity of providing support to member States in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Emphasizing the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach to reform in the Commission to achieve the desired results, including by developing the internal structure of the secretariat, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of its work, facilitating administrative procedures, and maximizing the benefits of new technologies,

Noting with appreciation the efforts undertaken by its Executive Secretary to date to improve service delivery and increase effectiveness and efficiency of work procedures,

Having reviewed the document on progress in ESCWA reform ([E/ESCWA/S-6/14](#)) and the proposed programme plan for 2021 ([E/ESCWA/S-6/16](#)),

1. *Adopts* the proposed programme plan contained in document [E/ESCWA/S-6/16](#);
2. *Welcomes* the changes to the structure of the Commission as set out in document [E/ESCWA/S-6/14](#);
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to take the necessary measures to ensure the full implementation of the programme plan and subprogrammes as amended, including modifying and harmonizing the internal structure of ESCWA, and member States support the Executive Secretary in implementing these procedures and in requesting additional resources to that end if needed.

Fourth plenary session

21 December 2019

Resolution 336 (S-VI) Requests by Algeria and Somalia for membership of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Noting the communication from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Somalia of 14 September 2019 addressed to the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, in which Somalia requests to join the Commission as a full member,

Noting also the communication from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria of 21 October 2019 addressed to the secretariat, in which Algeria requests to join the Commission as a full member,

Recalling the admission of the Sudan to the Commission in 2008 pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/8 of 22 July 2008, the accession of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/1 of 10 July 2012, and the admission of Mauritania pursuant to Economic and Social Council Resolution 2015/32 of 22 July 2015,

Recalling also its resolution 302 (XXVII) of 10 May 2012 which invites all Arab countries to join the Commission,

1. *Welcomes* the requests by Algeria and Somalia to join the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia;
2. *Recommends* that the Economic and Social Council accept the two requests;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of the present resolution.

Fourth plenary session
21 December 2019

II. Recommendations

3. At the close of the sixth session, representatives of member States thanked Jordan for its hospitality during the session.
4. The Commission adopted the following recommendations on the agenda items of the special session.

A. Recommendations to member States

5. The Commission made the following recommendations to member States:
 - (a) Address the permanent missions in New York to call for action with other countries and the secretariat to support the ESCWA vision for reform adopted at the sixth special session, and to confirm their commitment to improving the performance of the organization in providing support to member States;
 - (b) Continue to follow developments in the Belt and Road Initiative and delve into its effects on and consequences for Arab countries by conducting specialized studies in all fields covered by the Initiative;
 - (c) Welcome the development of the Sustainable Development Goals Monitor presented by the secretariat as an interactive practical tool for measuring progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab region, and disseminate it at the national level;

(d) Emphasize the importance of developing integrated and sustainable social protection systems and linking them to financial and macroeconomic policies, link social protection policies to labour market policies, and inform the secretariat of key developments and data on social protection reforms;

(e) Welcome the trend towards enhancing linkages between ESCWA activities within the framework of intergovernmental committees and of technical cooperation to ensure coherence in transferring knowledge generated by the secretariat to member States, and stress that the success of technical support depends on establishing clear and specific terms of reference.

B. Recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat

6. At its sixth special session, the Commission made the following recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat:

(a) Continue preparing technical reports on regional and global developments in the field of financing for development, analysing their regional implications, and converting findings into brief policy notes, while highlighting some regional specificities such as the role of endowment institutions;

(b) Continue evaluating reforms of the various components of social protection systems, while maintaining a comprehensive approach to these systems;

(c) Intensify normative efforts in monitoring and analysis to increase awareness of Israeli policies and practices and their direct and long-term repercussions for the Palestinian people, especially those aimed at consolidating Israeli control over the Palestinian territory and keeping the Palestinian economy dependent on Israel;

(d) Enhance support for the Palestinian people and their institutions to achieve justice and realize their inalienable rights, especially by supporting efforts aimed at ending Israeli violations of international law, by mitigating the economic and social impact of those violations on the living standards of the Palestinian people and on achieving sustainable development, and by mobilizing resources and building regional and international partnerships;

(e) Continue to benefit from the analyses, findings, recommendations and services in the field of climate change provided by the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies and the RICCAR Regional Knowledge Hub, and refer to them when preparing policies, strategies, reports and research at the regional and national levels; and take note of efforts to mobilize financial resources to support the Centre's activities and call for intensifying those efforts;

(f) Continue to strengthen integration in funding projects using extrabudgetary resources, the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation and the ESCWA regular budget to support the work of the secretariat;

(g) Update the technical cooperation portal to allow countries to review completed activities, and develop the internal electronic system of ESCWA to follow up on technical cooperation requests with member States.

III. Topics of discussion

A. Consideration of requests from Algeria and Somalia for ESCWA membership (Agenda item 3)

7. With reference to document E/ESCWA/S-6/3, the Commission decided to submit to the Economic and Social Council a recommendation on accepting the membership requests from Algeria and Somalia.

B. Follow-up issues

1. Implementation of recommendations made by the Executive Committee at its sixth meeting (Agenda item 4)

8. With reference to document E/ESCWA/S-6/4, the representative of the secretariat reviewed progress in implementing the activities undertaken by ESCWA pursuant to recommendations issued by the Executive Committee at its sixth meeting (Marrakech, Morocco, 15-16 June 2019). He summarized the recommendations and actions taken to implement them, including developing a tool for evaluating the impact of trade policies and reforms on selected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); contributing to preparations for a specialized workshop on developing a methodology for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Arab Strategic Framework for the Eradication of Multidimensional Poverty 2020-2030; publishing a report on the social and economic situation of Palestinian women and girls; and designing a project for Yemen entitled "Towards a Yemeni participatory vision for recovery".

9. He also reviewed activities completed at the regional level, including organizing a workshop on strengthening national capacity for conducting voluntary national reviews in the Arab region, agreeing with the League of Arab States and the World Bank to prepare a regional annual report to monitor progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, organizing a series of activities in the field of statistics that brought together political decision makers and specialized statisticians, designing the first interactive tool on the economic cost of violence against women, and developing a digital empowerment portal for the Arab initiative on small and medium enterprises.

10. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of the State of Palestine enquired about coordination with the League of Arab States and other regional organizations regarding the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development; and about the difference between the regional report to monitor the Goals implemented annually, which was mentioned in the presentation, and the regional report to monitor the Goals implemented over a five-year period. He asked about the point of establishing an office of the Regional Development Coordinator, given the large number of other relevant organizations operating in the region.

11. Regarding recommendation (f) on increasing women's economic participation in the Arab region, the representative of the United Arab Emirates reviewed his country's experience in achieving gender balance, especially in employment, through a number of measures, including amending laws to increase women's participation. He requested that his country's successful experience be included in relevant ESCWA reports. The representative of Kuwait noted his country's efforts in the field of empowering women and increasing their participation, indicating that the current Government included three women ministers.

12. Regarding recommendation (k) on providing technical support to member States in preparing voluntary national reviews, the representative of Iraq said that ESCWA had supported her country in submitting its first voluntary review, and requested further support in drafting a voluntary report that was being prepared at the local level. The representative of Yemen asked about the availability of resources to implement the project on Yemen. He stressed that it was vital to issue the project's vision document, given its importance in securing funding. The representative of the Sudan said that it was necessary to identify ways of expanding economic opportunities for women, and opportunities to apply value chains in agricultural areas, noting that no development was possible without industrialization. The representative of Lebanon requested that her country be placed on the food security map given the challenges it was currently facing. The representative of Egypt expressed his support for the Executive Secretary's reform measures, stressing the need to focus on food security. The representative of Morocco also expressed his country's support for the reform process.

13. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that a working group, comprising United Nations organizations operating at the regional level and the secretariat of the League of Arab States, met every year to discuss the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, whose main theme was selected in accordance with the theme of the High-level Forum of the Economic and Social Council and with regional priorities. As for the

difference between the two reports, he explained that the annual report was new. It aimed to summarize annual progress using a set of key SDG indicators, and to inform decision makers. The five-year report was longer, more detailed, and included a broader analysis. Regarding the date of the ESCWA session, he said that the secretariat wanted to set a date that ensured the widest possible participation of member States. It was proposed that it be held in April, with the possibility of amendment.

14. The Executive Secretary said that there were several common regional issues which required cooperation and dialogue between countries to address, because no one country had the capacity to tackle them alone. Issues to be monitored annually included climate change, water, conflict, and economic integration, hence the need to provide common platforms to work with other countries. The regional annual report was being prepared in that context. Regarding reforms, she noted that the United Nations was striving to reform regional organizations to increase effectiveness in serving member States. Some reforms were general, while others were specific to the needs of each region. She added that a resident coordinator coordinated the work of United Nations organizations in each country, while a regional development coordinator was responsible for following up with resident coordinators across a region.

15. The representative of the secretariat thanked the representative of the United Arab Emirates for shedding light on the importance of amending laws to increase women's participation, stressing the need for Arab countries to benefit from each other's experiences, and noting that Gulf countries were competing positively with each other to secure achievements in that important field. She said that the United Nations considered voluntary reports at the local level an achievement. ESCWA had developed a framework for those reports. Work had begun with Egypt on their development and would be circulated to other countries. Regarding Yemen, she noted that a political agreement alone would not lead to a lasting solution unless complemented by a comprehensive development vision. A dialogue must be launched between Yemenis on achieving inclusive development for all so as to encourage donor countries. She indicated that ESCWA would use its budget to launch the work programme, pending the receipt of other resources. She mentioned food security in the Sudan, and the role of women in the informal agricultural sector. She emphasized that ESCWA was working on the nexus between the water and agricultural sectors in the Sudan, on increasing rural women's capacity and participation, and on benefiting from renewable energy in agricultural areas in cooperation with women's associations. She noted that ESCWA was working on the issue of value chains in the context of food security and trade. In response to the request by the representative of Lebanon, she indicated a work programme with the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Bank to revitalize agriculture in Lebanon. She said that an emergency plan had been launched in collaboration with the American University of Beirut to achieve food sustainability and revitalize the agricultural sector.

*2. Implementation of the Beirut Consensus on Technology for Sustainable Development
in the Arab Region
(Agenda items 5 (a) and (b))*

16. With reference to document E/ESCWA/S-6/5(Part I), the representative of the secretariat said that the document covered periodic progress in the secretariat's implementation of the Beirut Consensus on Technology for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region, which had been adopted by member States at the thirtieth ESCWA session (Beirut, 25-28 June 2018). The Beirut Consensus addressed the issue of technology in all dimensions of sustainable development. It consisted of two parts: the first related to the mandates of the secretariat and is the subject of the document under discussion, and the second to the mandates of members States as set out in document E/ESCWA/S-6/5(Part II). Member States had asked the secretariat to develop a clear vision for implementing the Beirut Consensus by linking it to the activities of the ESCWA regular programme, which was presented at the fifth meeting of the Executive Committee. Member States had also requested support through a questionnaire to gather information on implementation in Arab countries. Five countries had answered those questions; their reports had been published on the ESCWA website.

17. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Yemen said that conflict in his country had not prevented some achievements in implementing the Beirut Consensus, such as introducing Internet service to the capital;

utilizing technology to train young people and create jobs; and expanding the use of alternative energy because of weak electricity coverage from destroyed infrastructure. The representative of Iraq said that her country had adopted legislation on investing in information technology, and requested support from ESCWA in employing information technology in tax systems. The representative of Jordan noted that his country stressed the need to consider technology a pillar of sustainable development.

C. Regional and global issues

1. Financing for development in 2019: global developments and regional challenges as reflected in the Arab Financing for Development Scorecard (Agenda item 6)

18. With reference to document E/ESCWA/S-6/6, the representative of the secretariat reviewed key outcomes related to progress in financing for development. He presented an assessment from a regional perspective on progress achieved under the following five themes: domestic resource mobilization, domestic and international private business and finance, international development cooperation, international trade as an engine for development, and debt and debt sustainability. At the regional level, he said that the Arab region still faced complex challenges that hindered national efforts to benefit from various tools for mobilizing resources to finance development, as set out in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

19. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Egypt considered tax evasion practices and the role of information technology in combating them. He said that the ability to prepare promising and achievable projects attracted financing. The representative of Yemen noted that part of the financing for development that reached the region was not invested in development or in job creation, especially in conflict-affected countries, but was rather invested in humanitarian interventions such as rebuilding and assisting the displaced. The representative of the Sudan indicated that there had been a decline in investments owing to protectionist laws and measures, although such measures were important to avoid harmful practices. She said that those measures should aim at encouraging investment that was in the interest of development. The representative of Mauritania requested that ESCWA organize training workshops on tax evasion and money smuggling, and to highlight the parameters of interoperability to encourage inter-investment. The representative of the State of Palestine said that needs differed between Arab countries according to country specificities in terms of economic structure and determinants of development, and imposed themselves on financing mechanisms. He indicated that the study had omitted social contributions to financing development, including *waqf* institutions, which were key bodies for funding development by considering options for attracting national capabilities. The representative of Jordan emphasized that it was vital to adopt alternatives to development assistance and other grants, such as the private sector and productive mechanisms. He said that the will of States was an essential element for enhancing regional cooperation to avoid money smuggling and tax evasion. A dialogue could be conducted with the international community to distinguish between humanitarian and development assistance. He added that the study neglected the issue of intraregional trade.

20. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that regional integration was an essential component of development in the Arab region, but it should not come at the expense of international integration to avoid the region becoming isolated from other regions and countries globally, especially since the world had become one village. He noted deficiencies in integration according to relevant indicators, given that what could be produced and sold in the Arab region did not exceed a third of its imports. He stressed the importance of diversity in investment, and the need to prioritize joint Arab investment without relying on international investment. He said that intraregional trade was a regional issue that did not relate to a specific country, and therefore required regional decisions. Regarding disparate development needs between countries, he noted that ESCWA was preparing a study based on a macroeconomic model to identify countries' financing needs to achieve each SDG, bearing in mind that the SDGs were interrelated and that progress in achieving one contributed to achieving others.

2. *Belt and Road Initiative: what is in it for the Arab region?*
(Agenda item 7)

21. With reference to document ESCWA/C.5/2019/CRP.2-E/ESCWA/S-6/7, the representative of the secretariat introduced the components of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative: road belts and sea routes. He said that the Initiative would impact global trade by increasing trade volumes, and that the United Nations viewed the Initiative positively. He highlighted the opportunities and risks it carried for the Arab region and its current and potential impact, while focusing on how to increase benefits for Arab countries. He said that ESCWA was setting out related projects in an integrated vision on the role of multimodal transport in connecting countries to each other, the region and the world. He stressed the importance of cooperating with the League of Arab States to reach a unified position on the Initiative, which would ensure a balance between Chinese and Arab interests.

22. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Egypt said that the Initiative would lead to an increase in certain types of trade. He called for a unified Arab position, and for efforts to adapt the Initiative to serve Arab countries' interests. The representative of Kuwait commended ESCWA efforts in that area, and called on Arab countries to benefit from them. The representative of the United Arab Emirates made comments on the document, noting that the Initiative could not be reduced to maps and that it was open to development. He said that the study did not mention Arab countries' investments in various fields worldwide, nor did it specify the methodology for comparing circumstances before and after joining the Initiative. He said that there was no harm in brokering bilateral agreements with China, since waiting for consensus under the umbrella of the League of Arab States could result in wasted opportunities for Arab countries. He asked States that had signed memorandums of understanding with China and had data on the Initiative to share it with other Arab States. The representative of Jordan enquired about who could request the signing of bilateral memorandums of understanding, China or the other State.

23. In response, the representative of the secretariat emphasized that maritime transport was the least expensive, but the development of inland regions in China required rail transport because it was less expensive owing to their distance from the sea, and it reduced transport times. He said that ESCWA would conduct a comprehensive survey to develop a vision on the relationship between the Initiative and Arab countries, and that the survey would determine the volume of each country's investment abroad. He added that the presentation was a preliminary overview of existing agreements and of publications by international institutions such as the World Bank, and that China was interested in establishing partnerships with all countries for economic, cultural and social reasons. Regarding the economic forum between China and Arab countries, the League of Arab States' efforts had not succeeded in unifying the Arab position. States were continuing to sign bilateral memorandums of understanding, which posed risks that could not be tackled unless Arab States were able to address China as a single bloc. He said that the Chinese position was ambiguous in terms of the Initiative's boundaries and the projects involved.

3. *Social protection reform in Arab countries*
(Agenda item 8)

24. With reference to document E/ESCWA/C.2/2019/CRP.1-E/ESCWA/S-6/8, the representative of the secretariat made a presentation on social protection reform in Arab countries. She said that efforts had intensified in that area in the Arab region following the 2011 uprisings, which had led to positive results in countries with sound structural policies, and to unsatisfactory results in other countries. The greatest challenge facing Governments lay in defining the basic criteria for redistribution, in terms of deciding whether there was a need for it, a right to it, or a possibility of benefiting from it. She indicated that existing systems in the region were fragmented and lacked a reference to guide policies from a holistic perspective. She listed the components of social protection systems, and the approaches followed by Arab countries in dealing with them, the first of which was social insurance. She said that Governments faced two challenges in that regard: a large informal economic sector that did not contribute to the systems, and the sustainability of insurance systems. Regarding the second component, namely health care, she noted that Governments often resorted to including health

insurance in retirement plans to encourage participation. However, poor quality and overstretched public health services did not provide the poor and middle class with better social protection in the field of health, and they were often obliged to make out-of-pocket payments for treatment and medication.

25. Regarding the third component, social assistance, she said that related challenges included identifying groups suffering from poverty, the type of support that each group needed, and the level of support that should be provided. She added that the impact of subsidies on the labour market should not be overlooked, so that assistance did not discourage people from participating in it. Regarding the fourth component, governance, she said that it required efforts to coordinate protection measures and avoid duplication. With regard to the fifth component, national records, she said that their greatest benefits lay in clarifying the social identity of every household, especially in the informal sector, and linking that identity to tax records. She noted that the main problem with such records was the cost of creating and updating them, and that obtaining comprehensive records was a significant challenge. She reviewed various scenarios that could be followed in social protection systems, including the opportunities and challenges presented by each scenario. She stressed that the role of social protection systems was to reduce poverty not to eliminate it, because the latter should be undertaken within the broader social and economic policy framework.

26. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of the State of Palestine noted the differences between social security requirements and country capacity. He said that the role of Governments was limited to supporting and guiding social insurance programmes, but they could not force people to join those programmes. He indicated a unique case in his country that had not been covered in the document, which was the lack of desire of workers and employers to join the social security system because of the high cost to employers and workers' lack of confidence in it. He asked what Governments could do in that situation. The representative of the Sudan considered taxation as a means of financing social protection systems, emphasizing that existing tax systems placed the greatest burden on the poor. She also enquired whether the optimal assistance mechanism was providing cash transfers or supporting small projects. The representative of Yemen stressed that the informal sector represented a major challenge, and that cash transfers that a country like Yemen could provide to the poor were insufficient, regardless of whether they were from the State treasury or from donors.

27. In response, the representative of the secretariat stressed that neither employers nor workers wished to pay contributions, even in developed countries, because they did not see the direct benefit of such spending. She added that Governments resorted to either merging health and social insurance because subscribers could see the direct benefit of health insurance, or to imposing heavy fines on those failing to pay contributions. She agreed that the poor bore a heavy tax burden, especially indirect taxes, stressing that tax policies should not be separate from fiscal policies. Regarding the issue of an optimal assistance mechanism, she said that support to small enterprises, which were subject to high failure rates as evidenced by the experiences of Arab countries, were not a substitute for transfers, whether in cash or in kind. She emphasized the problem of the informal sector in the region, noting that the social conditions of that sector were not well studied. With regard to insufficient cash transfers, she said that fixed transfers, even if small, provided a minimum level of assistance, but social assistance could not compensate for the failure of social infrastructure, indicating that social policy was as important as social assistance.

*4. Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation and coping mechanisms
of the Palestinian people
(Agenda item 9)*

28. With reference to document E/ESCWA/S-6/9, the representative of the secretariat made a presentation on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation, which included an overview of Israeli policies and practices. He said that the occupying power aimed to tighten its control over the land and to formalize it by increasing the number of settlements. He added that Israeli practices included policies that led to the displacement of Palestinians, such as forced displacement, transportation to alternative residential areas, the demolition of homes and facilities, in addition to systematic repression, including excessive use of force,

arbitrary detention, and collective punishment. He discussed legislative developments related to the occupation and the Israeli State's dealings with the occupied Palestinian territory. He reviewed key legislation, stressing that they aimed to influence the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and to consolidate Israeli control over it. He mentioned the main economic and social repercussions of Israeli policies, stressing that they resulted in deteriorating living conditions of Palestinians that were exacerbated by major deficiencies in donor support; impeded economic growth, especially in the Gaza Strip owing to the blockade; increased poverty, unemployment and food insecurity; and prevented access to education and health-care services.

29. He discussed the mechanisms through which Palestinian households sought to adapt and cope, noting that they included broad measures ranging from reducing expenditure and consumption to mobilizing available human resources and economic capital. He said that those mechanisms were aimed either at limiting the impact of occupation policies, or at finding alternatives that allowed society and institutions to continue performing their roles to a minimum. He briefly listed the factors affecting those mechanisms, including the general policies of the Palestinian Government, Israeli policies that had led to increased priorities of a regional nature, and growing dependence on external financing. He concluded by reviewing examples of mechanisms that could be relied upon in the long run, such as social solidarity.

30. Representatives of member States commended ESCWA efforts to monitor the practices of the Israeli occupation and to expose its repercussions at international forums, and expressed their desire to continue those efforts.

*5. Regional review and assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration
and Platform for Action 25 years after their adoption in Arab countries
(Agenda item 10)*

31. With reference to document E/ESCWA/C.7/2019/5-E/ESCWA/S-6/10, the representative of the secretariat made a presentation on the regional review and assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the Arab region, which he began by introducing the concepts of the review and assessment, noting that ESCWA was cooperating with the League of Arab States and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in receiving national reviews and consolidating them in the regional report. He said that ESCWA, in addition to its traditional partnerships in the review and assessment process, had opened the way for new and broader partnerships with numerous organizations and institutions. He listed the stages of the process for issuing the regional report and the activities undertaken by ESCWA in supporting Arab countries to prepare their national reviews. He noted that those activities included a regional workshop on the illustrative principles for preparing regional reviews, held in Beirut on 15 and 16 January 2019; and the High-level Conference on Progress Made in the Implementation of Beijing after Twenty-Five Years, held in Amman on 28 November 2019, which had resulted in an Arab Declaration containing several recommendations. He emphasized that the regional report had based its data on national reports and voluntary national reviews. He added that the regional report covered the achievements of member States during the previous period and their priorities for the coming period to direct the work of the ESCWA Centre for Women, and reviewed those priorities. He concluded by discussing key recommendations of the aforementioned High-level Arab Conference.

32. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Mauritania said that his country had submitted its review to the Economic Commission for Africa and to ESCWA, enquiring about ESCWA coordination with other regional commissions in that regard to avoid duplication of pledges for countries members of more than one regional commission. The representative of Iraq discussed her country's national review, noting that it focused on displaced women. She said that it was necessary to include that issue among the priorities of the ESCWA Centre for Women, especially since several Arab countries were either in conflict or just emerging from conflict. The representative of the State of Palestine expressed his desire to see the regional report to learn about the methodology for measuring progress in the region. He expressed concern about the relationship between the work priorities of the Centre for Women and the recommendations set out in the Arab Declaration,

explaining that the priorities should include, pursuant to the recommendations, national laws, legislation and strategies, and information and data.

33. In response, the representative of the secretariat confirmed that ESCWA had collaborated with Mauritania in preparing its national review, and that officials in Mauritania had reported that the same review would be submitted to both regional commissions. He added that submitting a review to two commissions was not limited to Mauritania, but included other countries such as Algeria. It was not a problem since all reviews flowed into a consolidated global report. With regard to priorities, he mentioned the working mechanism for the review and assessment processes, indicating that the Economic and Social Council, in collaboration with UN-Women, issued a questionnaire to regional commissions that provided training to member States. He stressed that all priorities intersected and included laws, strategies and information, indicating that national machineries should aim to mainstream gender, and that the task of ESCWA was to help them do so. In response to the suggestion by the representative of Iraq, he emphasized that the recommendations included displaced women, and the status of women during and after conflict. He added that national and regional reports, in addition to the Arab Declaration, were published on the ESCWA website.

6. Climate change: regional and global developments (Agenda item 11)

34. With reference to document E/ESCWA/S-6/11, the representative of the secretariat made a presentation on the proceedings of the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Madrid, 2-13 December 2019). She summarized key provisions of the 2015 Paris Agreement, and concluded that instead of making progress in implementing the Paris Agreement's requirements, the indicators showed a deterioration, especially in the Arab region. She reviewed the implementation of the Paris Agreement in the Arab region in terms of work related to mitigating the effects of climate change and adapting to those effects, and discussed Arab countries' positions with regard to climate change negotiations and nationally determined contributions. She mentioned ESCWA activities in that area in preparation for the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties, which were similar to the twelfth regional training workshop on capacity development for climate change negotiations (Beirut, 7-8 April 2019) and thirteenth regional workshop (Cairo, 3-5 November 2019). She noted that ESCWA had collaborated with the Arab Group on climate negotiations, especially on building the capacity of Arab negotiators.

35. She mentioned the issue of financing climate action, noting that Bahrain and the State of Palestine had received funding. However, financing was still below the required level and focused on climate change mitigation not adaptation, although the Arab region required adaptation financing. Moreover, financing was provided in the form of loans not grants, thus limiting sustainable development efforts. She discussed the ESCWA Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies, reviewing its work areas and the various activities it had undertaken between December 2018 and November 2019.

36. Representatives of member States expressed their appreciation for ESCWA efforts supporting climate action in Arab countries, and their hope for further collaboration in the coming period.

7. The Sustainable Development Goals Monitor (Agenda item 12)

37. With reference to document E/ESCWA/S-6/12, the representative of secretariat made a presentation on the Sustainable Development Goals Monitor in the Arab region, prepared by ESCWA. She said that the Monitor provided users with a clear picture of progress in the region under each SDG, its indicators and targets, and monitored over a period of several years developments and rates in the region and in each country to complement the ESCWA data portal. She noted that the indicators covered by the Monitor were chosen according to the priorities of each country, adding that those priorities were determined by public policies, and that their measurement was supplemented by alternative indicators. She reviewed current and future efforts to establish an electronic platform for the Monitor, indicating that the establishment of the Monitor consisted of

several stages, and that the presentation covered the first stage that provided an overview of the Arab region. She emphasized that the Monitor would facilitate the identification of strengths and weaknesses in the production of indicator data in the region, allowing ESCWA to define a capacity-building strategy with specialized agencies. She explained the Monitor's functions, including providing comparative results for several Arab countries which reflected how the Monitor could be used.

38. The Executive Secretary said that the Monitor also provided data disaggregated by country groups, and that there are 573 sustainable development indicators, stressing that no country had provided data for all those indicators. She mentioned disparities between Arab countries in providing data, noting that the lack of data ranged between 4 per cent and 56 per cent of indicators. The shortage meant that no country had completely met its requirements, because data collection was a key criteria for achieving sustainable development. It was not sufficient to exert efforts without accurate data. She emphasized that the role of ESCWA included assisting countries in collecting those data, which was a major undertaking requiring significant effort and cooperation, especially as the deadline for achieving the SDGs was approaching. She added that the Monitor would provide a national perspective for each country thus saving Arab countries the effort, time and money required to develop their own national monitor. ESCWA was expected to complete the remaining stages of establishing the Monitor before the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, to be held in April 2020.

39. Representatives of member States commended the Monitor, expressing their appreciation for ESCWA efforts to establish it. The representative of Mauritania indicated that his country's voluntary national review had covered the largest possible number of SDGs, based on national statistics. He said that Mauritania would conduct more surveys in the near future, adding that his country was facing challenges in data collection at the local level and requesting that ESCWA support that undertaking. The representative of Iraq asked whether the term 'specialized agencies' in the secretariat's presentation referred to statistical offices in countries or in international organizations. She also enquired about what was meant by the targets presented by the Monitor, and whether they were determined nationally or set out in global international frameworks. She also asked whether ESCWA had notified member States of missing indicators to complete the Monitor, and whether ESCWA intended to use progress reports that countries had prepared at the local level for more data.

40. The representative of Egypt suggested that the secretariat send experts to countries facing severe data shortages, which would provide an opportunity to interact with national actors involved in data collection and production, to identify challenges in their work and areas for the assistance that ESCWA could provide. He also enquired about States members of more than one regional body, such as Egypt, noting that the classification of Egypt in terms of data collection varied between the ESCWA Monitor and studies of other regional bodies, and called for standardization and coordination with other commissions in that regard. The representative of Yemen noted the problem of conflicting multiple national and international data sources, adding that national offices might face problems and challenges as was the case in his country where data production had stopped in 2015 owing to conflict. The representative of the State of Palestine stressed the necessity of comparing between all Arab countries, not only within country groups, which would help countries identify areas where they were below regional averages. He also indicated that the Monitor, in its current form, provided statistical reports only, proposing that it also provide lessons learned and success stories to exchange experiences between Arab countries.

41. In response, the representative of the secretariat reviewed the flow of data, and the reasons for the emergence of some and the absence of others. She said that the 2030 Agenda gave countries the responsibility to collect and publish development data in accordance with international standards, and to enhance them with metadata. After briefly reviewing the data forms contained in the global SDG database, she said that specialized agencies matched the data to allow comparison between countries. In that regard, the problem in Arab countries was that data were often available, but either they were not calculated according to international standards, or no metadata was provided for them. She added that countries carried out data classification, even at the minimum level (disaggregated by gender, geographical location and age group), but did not publish them in detail, even though classification was key to achieving the SDGs. In that context, she indicated a case study conducted by ESCWA in Jordan, in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning and the Department of

Statistics. She said that the study highlighted a number of indicators for which data had not been originally collected, a small number of indicators whose data were collected, and other indicators whose data were collected only once. That required the development of three strategies for each of those cases: one that allowed the dissemination of available data, another to collect unavailable data, and a third to enhance data that did not meet standards.

42. She considered conflict-affected countries that could not conduct surveys, indicating that those countries could rely, at a minimum, on administrative records, especially since 60 per cent of available SDG data to date were taken from those records. She noted that ESCWA, as a mediator between specialized international agencies and Arab member States, was holding workshops to bring together those stakeholders to assist countries facing weaknesses in collecting and disseminating data. She added that the Monitor helped identify problems, but it was first necessary to disseminate data correctly. Regarding inconsistencies between national statistical data and those issued by global sources, she said that national statistical systems published primary data, and sometimes did not complete their calculations according to international standards, so international organizations remedied such shortfalls either through modelling or through data from other sources. With regard to targets, she stressed that ESCWA used international targets, but added that the use of national targets was useful for comparison between the national and regional levels, and to tackle country priority areas.

43. The Executive Secretary stressed that the aim of the Monitor was not only to identify country weaknesses but to build their capacity, and that ESCWA would compile a list of member States' needs and assist in fulfilling them through the ESCWA team. She said that the problem in many countries was the existence of data that had not been disseminated, which hindered clearly understanding the situation in those countries. She emphasized that ESCWA sought to encourage member States to take the lead in that regard. She explained that the Monitor allowed each country to compare with other countries, and at the regional level, and aimed to reach comparisons at the global level, adding that making comparisons with the best countries globally in every field would show member States how close they were to those countries' achievements. She noted the use of artificial intelligence by ESCWA in identifying countries' priorities in relation to the SDGs, through a 'consultation' tool that extracted those priorities from voluntary national reviews. She addressed the issue of inconsistencies between national data and data issued by international bodies, stating that ESCWA, like all United Nations bodies, aligned national data with data from other countries in accordance with international standards, because ESCWA held an international and regional perspective that required standardization.

44. Regarding the uneven classification of countries in terms of data collection, as in the case of Egypt, the Executive Secretary emphasized that ESCWA based its classification on the most recent data issued by statistical institutions, which was based on a long and solid relationship with those institutions. She said that ESCWA intended to inform member States of missing data, at least in terms of the 2015 base year in which the 2030 Agenda was launched. She stressed that best practices were extremely important, and that the inclusion of countries' accomplishments in achieving the SDGs would enrich the Monitor.

IV. Work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies

A. Reports of ESCWA subsidiary bodies (Agenda item 13)

45. The representatives of the secretariat reviewed the reports of three subsidiary bodies of the Commission that held their sessions between the sixth meeting of the Executive Committee and the sixth special session of ESCWA, namely the report of the Committee on Energy on its twelfth session (E/ESCWA/C.3/2019/14/Report); the report of the Committee on Water Resources on its thirteenth session (E/ESCWA/C.4/2019/11/Report); and the report of the Committee on Social Development on its twelfth session (E/ESCWA/C.2/2019/9/Report). They presented key outcomes and recommendations contained in those reports.

46. The Commission adopted the recommendations included in the three reports.

B. Progress in ESCWA reform and the proposed programme plan for 2021
(Agenda items 14 and 16)

47. With reference to documents E/ESCWA/S-6/14 and E/ESCWA/S-6/16, the Executive Secretary reviewed the ongoing reform process at ESCWA, which was part of the entire United Nations system reform process. She said that the difference between the two processes was that reform at the United Nations level covered structural reforms, while the ESCWA reform process entailed fundamental reforms because it extended to work methodologies as well as structural reforms. She stressed the need for reforms in the context of rapid change globally and in member States, for keeping pace with technological developments, and for tackling increasingly complex issues and challenges in the Arab region. The main goal of the reform was expressed in the new ESCWA motto: "Shared prosperity, dignified life", especially serving Arab citizens by better serving member States to achieve national development plans and the 2030 Agenda. Internal reform aims included keeping pace with new management systems, reducing the bureaucratic burden, and empowering staff members.

48. The Executive Secretary presented the new areas of work that ESCWA would undertake under six subprogrammes instead of seven, and explained the rationale behind the proposed changes. She said that ESCWA had adopted a clusters approach, rather than working within the divisions assigned to each subprogramme. She noted that the complex and interrelated issues that ESCWA tackled required a change in its working method, and the adoption of an effective dynamic mechanism to form teams with different specializations and experience depending on the subject of the project under implementation. That change would provide ESCWA with more flexibility by encouraging competencies and not restricting them to a specific area, but rather assigning them to various projects to serve member States. The benchmark for success of those reforms was for ESCWA to become the main port of call for member States.

49. She explained that United Nations reforms covered five issues: coordinating between United Nations organizations; presenting knowledge produced by the United Nations to member States, and activating the role of experts to ensure maximum benefit; coordinating and operationalizing data and statistics; reducing financial burdens; and preparing reports covering the work of all organizations at the level of each region and submitting them to the General Assembly. She noted that ESCWA was leading the reform process in the areas of knowledge and data. She introduced the *Manara* project, which was a system that provided information, knowledge and platforms for training and education in Arabic, and stored policies and expertise to serve policymakers. Regarding cost reduction, she said that the United Nations House in Beirut would house United Nations agencies and bodies other than ESCWA. Another objective of the reform process was to shift ESCWA studies from publications to interactive simulation-based policy tools. Countries could use simulated scenarios, in accordance with their needs and specificities, to study measures they intended to take or proposals by donor organizations.

50. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Yemen commended the reforms and enquired about the measurement indicators that had been adopted, requesting not only quantitative indicators but the adoption of indicators measuring the impact of achievements. The representative of Morocco expressed his country's support for the reform process. The representative of Mauritania questioned the extent to which ESCWA had the authority to undertake this fundamental reform in the light of set standards that should be adhered to at the United Nations level. The representative of the State of Palestine enquired about the challenges hindering the implementation of the reforms and the plan for their proper management, noting that rebuilding teams was the main challenge, in addition to managing time and the process, especially since ESCWA staff members hailed from different backgrounds. He also asked to what extent the change was not just a consolidation process rather than a reform process stemming from a new vision for ESCWA, especially in view of the clear overlap in the responsibilities of a number of clusters. He also enquired about the role of the decision support unit. The representative of Mauritania asked about the issue of evaluating personal performance in a group, and on ways to secure any additional resources that the reform process might require.

51. In response, the Executive Secretary said that the subprogrammes were developed based on the vision and mission of ESCWA, which required a structure that enabled inclusive development, economic prosperity and stability, which could not be achieved without sustainable management of natural resources and ideas for technology use. The new structure was a process of inclusion in the light of needs and resources, and not just a consolidation process, as reforms were based on linkages between subprogrammes. That had required examining work style rather than simply altering structures. Regarding limits of the reform process in view of United Nations set standards, she indicated that she needed the approval of member States. She noted that opposition to reform was normal, and that she had conducted several conversations with staff members. The reform process was guided by the efforts of task forces established for that end, by questionnaires and surveys of staff opinion on reform, and by evaluating the performance of some subprogrammes, noting that the most significant opposition was to changing the working method. She said that the new working method would be applied to the 2020 programme of work. She noted that ESCWA had established a talent database where staff members could set out their skills in areas outside their specialization, for use when required. She added that the evaluation of projects should be based on their relevance and benefit to countries. The aim was not to simply produce knowledge, but to serve countries with that knowledge. She added that dialogue was open at ESCWA to representatives of member States and staff members in order to advance and amend the reform process.

52. She said that the decision support unit did not make decisions, but transformed knowledge-producing materials into policies, and was responsible for developing simulation tools and scenarios. ESCWA needed specialized people for that unit, but was coping with available resources to operationalize the unit to ensure greater efficiency. Regarding the process of evaluating staff performance, it consisted of two phases: firstly, members of a cluster would evaluate one another, and secondly, the entire group would be evaluated on the basis of the project's productivity. If the project failed, the whole team, not just the leader, would be held accountable, reflecting that ESCWA had moved from a system of bureaucracy to one of flexibility and dynamism, or from a style of leadership to a method of coordination and communication. The evaluation model would therefore become a group assessment. Each project must be aligned with the main objectives identified in the vision for each subprogramme. She indicated that ESCWA would prepare a report on the challenges and how they should be addressed, so that member States could be informed. She thanked member States for their support to ESCWA in the reform process.

C. Technical cooperation activities in 2019

(Agenda item 15)

53. With reference to document E/ESCWA/S-6/15, the representative of the secretariat made a presentation on technical cooperation activities, and related key issues such as climate change and poverty. He discussed the main dimensions in that context, such as strengthening the communication system with member States and enhancing effectiveness in technical cooperation. He said that ESCWA had hired an expert to document success stories, reviewing examples of those stories, similar to the online course in gender statistics that had benefited over 10,000 users. He added ESCWA had conducted over 170 national and regional courses, stressing that ESCWA intended to continue following that approach and to expand its scope. He noted the Social Expenditure Monitor developed by ESCWA, and that ESCWA was linking recommendations made by its intergovernmental committees to technical cooperation activities.

54. Representatives of member States welcomed those efforts, expressing their satisfaction with the new approach of ESCWA.

D. Other matters

(Agenda item 17)

55. No issues were discussed under this item.

V. Adoption of the resolutions and recommendations made by the Commission at its sixth special session

(Agenda item 18)

56. At the close of its sixth special session, the Commission adopted the resolutions and recommendations before it, as amended. Before adopting the draft resolutions, and pursuant to rule 24 of the Commission's rules of procedure which stipulates that before any proposal which involves expenditure from United Nations funds is approved by the Commission or by any of its subsidiary bodies, the Executive Secretary shall prepare and circulate to the members of the body concerned an estimate of the cost of implementing the proposal, the Secretary of the Commission read to representatives of member States an oral statement by the United Nations Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance on estimates of financial expenditures for the draft resolutions. He said that the implementation of paragraph 2 of resolution 335 (S-XI) would have financial implications of \$314,600 in 2021, and \$574,600 in the following years.

VI. Organization of work

A. Date and venue

57. ESCWA held its sixth special session in Amman on 21 and 22 December 2019. The Commission adopted the practice followed in the case of a special session, with members of the office of the previous regular session assuming the same functions in the special session. Accordingly, the representative of Tunisia chaired the sixth special session since his country had chaired the regular session. The representative of Iraq assumed the position of First Vice-Chair, and the representative of Qatar assumed the position of Second Vice-Chair. The representative of Oman was appointed Rapporteur.

B. Opening

58. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) opened its sixth special session at 10.15 a.m. in Amman on Saturday, 21 December 2019. The representative of Tunisia, Mr. Abdul Hamid Al-Gharbi, Director of Sustainable Development at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Chair of the session, welcomed participants and thanked Jordan for hosting the session. He reviewed a number of common challenges for Arab countries, especially regarding development. He welcomed the requests by Algeria and Somalia for ESCWA membership, and thanked the secretariat for organizing the session.

59. The Executive Secretary of ESCWA, Ms. Rola Dashti, thanked Jordan for hosting the session, and all member States for supporting ESCWA. She welcomed the accession of Algeria and Somalia to the ESCWA family, and expressed the Commission's aim to include all Arab countries. She said that ESCWA was the region's voice at international forums, reporting its challenges and achievements. It also served Arab countries in establishing development mechanisms for advancement and prosperity. She presented the topics to be addressed at the special session. She mentioned several regional and international challenges, and the requirement for ESCWA to keep pace with the needs of countries vis-à-vis those challenges, which necessitated a change in its working method. She expressed her confidence in a promising future for the Arab region if Arab countries joined forces to face challenges and take advantage of opportunities.

60. Mr. Wissam Al-Rabadi, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Jordan, made a statement in which he welcomed participants. He noted a number of global challenges, such as climate change and technological disruption, which required global solutions; and challenges specific to the Arab region, such as water scarcity. He emphasized the need to operationalize the role of women and young people, and to involve them in the development process. He thanked ESCWA for its support to Arab countries, especially to his country, and wished the session every success.

C. Attendance

61. Representatives of ESCWA member States participated in the sixth special session. The list of participants is set out in annex I to the present report.

D. Agenda and other organizational matters

62. The Secretary of the Commission presented the proposed agenda for the sixth special session, and suggested that items 14 and 16 be reviewed and discussed together given that there were closely linked. At its first plenary session, the Commission adopted the agenda contained in document E/ESCWA/S-6/L.1, and the organization of work set out in document E/ESCWA/S-6/L.2, as amended.

Annex I

List of participants

Bahrain

Mr. Ahmed Youssef Ahmed Al-Ruwaie
Ambassador of Bahrain to Jordan
Amman

Egypt

Mr. Omar Abu Aish
Assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for
Economic Affairs

Iraq

Ms. Oqud Hussain Salman
Ministry of Planning

Jordan

Mr. Wissam Adnan Al-Rabadi
Minister of Planning and International Cooperation
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Mr. Malik Braizat
Head of the Department of Arab and Islamic
Relations
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Kuwait

Mr. Nabil Suleiman Al-Abd Al-Jalil
Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance
Assistant for Economic Affairs
Ministry of Finance

Mr. Ahmed Abdul Hamid Al-Muzaini
Second Secretary

Ms. Iman Ibrahim Al-Haddad
Head of the International Organizations
Department
Ministry of Finance

Lebanon

Ms. Tracy Shamoun
Ambassador of Lebanon to Jordan
Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Amman

Mr. Imad Lakkis
Administrator
Embassy of Lebanon in Jordan
Amman

Mauritania

Mr. Mohamed Taqrah
Strategy and Policy Director
General Department for Development Policies and
Strategies
Ministry of Economy and Industry

Morocco

Mr. Hisham O Si Hamo
Head of the Economic and Financial Issues
Department
Directorate of Multilateral Cooperation and
International Economic Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation
and Moroccan Expatriates

Oman

Ms. Souad Al-Fadil
Manager
Supreme Council for Planning

Mr. Ali bin Saeed bin Abdullah Al-Jabri
Economic Agreements Statistician
Supreme Council for Planning

State of Palestine

Mr. Mahmoud Attaya
Director-General
Policy Priorities and Reform Unit
Prime Minister's Office

Qatar

Mr. Shaheen bin Ali Al Kaabi
Minister Delegate
Assistant Director of the Department of
International Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Majid bin Nayef bin Hathal al-Otaibi
Embassy of Saudi Arabia to Jordan
Amman

Sudan

Ms. Radia Khamis Abdel-Jabbar
Director of International and Regional
Organizations
Ministry of Industry and Trade

Ms. Salwa Mohamed Haj Ibrahim
Deputy Director of International and Regional
Organizations
Ministry of Industry and Trade

Tunisia

Mr. Abdul Hamid Al-Gharbi
Director of Sustainable Development
Directorate General for Multilateral Cooperation
and Cross-Cutting Issues
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

United Arab Emirates

Mr. Mohammed Ahmed bin Abdulaziz Al Shehhi
Undersecretary for Economic Affairs
Ministry of Economy

Ms. Hanan Abdullah Al-Qadi
Senior Administrator
Ministry of Economy

Ms. Nada Al-Hashimi
Director of the Department of Economic Strategic
Studies
Ministry of Economy

Yemen

Mr. Mohammed Ahmed Al-Hawiri
Undersecretary of the Ministry of Planning
Sector of Economic Studies and Forecasts

Annex II

List of documents

Title	Item	Symbol
Information for participants		E/ESCWA/S-6/INF.1
Provisional agenda and annotations	2	E/ESCWA/S-6/L.1
Organization of work	2	E/ESCWA/S-6/L.2
Consideration of requests from Somalia and Algeria for ESCWA membership	3	E/ESCWA/S-6/3 (Arabic only)
Implementation of recommendations made by the Executive Committee at its sixth meeting	4	E/ESCWA/S-6/4 (Arabic only)
Implementation of the Beirut Consensus on Technology for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region	5	E/ESCWA/S-6/5 (Arabic only)
Activities undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat	5 (a)	E/ESCWA/S-6/5(Part I) (Arabic only)
Activities undertaken by member States	5 (b)	E/ESCWA/S-6/5(Part II) (Arabic only)
Financing for development in 2019: global developments and regional challenges as reflected in the Arab Financing for Development Scorecard	6	E/ESCWA/S-6/6 (Arabic only)
Belt and Road Initiative: what is in it for the Arab region?	7	E/ESCWA/C.5/2019/CRP.2 E/ESCWA/S-6/7
Social protection reform in Arab countries	8	E/ESCWA/C.2/2019/CRP.1 E/ESCWA/S-6/8
Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation and coping mechanisms of the Palestinian people	9	E/ESCWA/S-6/9 (Arabic only)
Regional review and assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years after their adoption in Arab countries	10	E/ESCWA/C.7/2019/5 E/ESCWA/S-6/10 (Arabic only)
Climate change: regional and global developments	11	E/ESCWA/S-6/11
The Sustainable Development Goals Monitor	12	E/ESCWA/S-6/12
Reports of ESCWA subsidiary bodies	13	E/ESCWA/S-6/13
Progress in ESCWA reform	14	E/ESCWA/S-6/14
Technical cooperation activities in 2019	15	E/ESCWA/S-6/15 (Arabic only)
Proposed programme plan for 2021	16	E/ESCWA/S-6/16