



**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Executive Committee  
Sixth meeting  
Marrakech, Morocco, 15-16 June 2019

Item 3 of the provisional agenda



**Implementation of recommendations made  
by the Executive Committee at its fifth meeting**

**Summary**

The Executive Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its fifth meeting at the United Nations House in Beirut, on 18 and 19 December 2018. It issued a set of recommendations to member States and to the ESCWA secretariat. The present document sets out the measures taken by the secretariat to implement the recommendations issued to it.

The Executive Committee is invited to take note of implemented recommendations and to comment thereon.

## **Recommendations made by the Executive Committee at its fifth meeting to the ESCWA secretariat and measures taken to implement them**

### **Recommendation (a)**

Present a periodic report on progress in implementing the Beirut Consensus to the Executive Committee at its sixth meeting, establish a timeframe for the proposed activities, and develop a mechanism to follow up on the implementation of the Beirut Consensus at the national level.

### **Implementation**

The Executive Committee has before it a document on progress in implementing the [Beirut Consensus on Technology for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region](#), under item 4 (a) of the agenda for its sixth meeting. The secretariat has developed an advisory questionnaire to continue implementing the Beirut Consensus at the national level, which it sent to focal points in member States in early May 2019. It has dedicated item 4 (b) of the agenda for its sixth meeting to reviewing progress in member States.

### **Recommendation (b)**

Allocate more human resources from the secretariat to the issue of financing for development so as to fulfil the significant responsibilities associated with financing challenges in the region and to increase technical cooperation activities in the field of financing for development at the national level through the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC) in order to support countries' specific needs, and mobilize extrabudgetary resources in that area.

### **Implementation**

The secretariat was not able to allocate more human resources to the issue of financing for development since December 2018, but it continued to undertake several activities to follow up on the financing for development process in the Arab region, including preparing a concept note for workshops on taxation, which was requested by the Jordanian Ministry of Finance.

The secretariat aims to support financing for development in the region by mobilizing extrabudgetary resources. It is also considering the possibility of establishing an Arab forum on fiscal and financial policies, and preparing a study on the topic. The study will present a proposal on the forum's framework and structure, priority issues for its consideration, and key relationships and partnerships required to support such efforts.

### **Recommendation (c)**

Keep pace with progress in financing for development and inform member States of milestones in that area, including international events in 2019 such as the Forum on Financing for Development of the Economic and Social Council, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development.

### **Implementation**

In late 2018, ESCWA launched a report entitled "[The state of financing for development in the Arab region](#)" to monitor developments in sustainable development financing. The report aimed to inform Arab States of the current status of financing for development in the region, and to highlight lost opportunities in that area. On the basis of the report, ESCWA participated in preparing the [Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2019](#) and in launching it in Beirut on 10 April 2019, concurrently with its launch in several other cities. This global report is the result of concerted efforts between over 50 United Nations bodies, including ESCWA.

ESCWA also participated in preparing the [first panel discussion](#) of the 2019 Financing for Development Forum of the Economic and Social Council, held in New York from 15 to 18 April 2019. ESCWA, on behalf of all the United Nations regional commissions, highlighted the regional perspective in a statement made at the session.

#### **Recommendation (d)**

Continue efforts to build the statistical capacity of member States to monitor SDG implementation under the Arab Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, and strengthen existing partnerships and coordination between Governments, specialized United Nations agencies and regional organizations.

#### **Implementation**

Since the fifth meeting of the Executive Committee, ESCWA has followed up on the implementation of the Arab Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, aimed at building the capacity of member States to monitor progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Working Group on SDG Data, under the Regional Coordination Mechanism for the Arab region, prepared lists of capacity-building activities and SDG data flows that can be used to coordinate statistical capacity-building activities. The Working Group updates the lists annually. The ESCWA secretariat prepared frameworks for SDG-related social, environmental and economic indicators in the Arab region, which were discussed by representatives of national statistical offices at the thirteenth session of the ESCWA Statistical Committee (Beirut, 29-30 January 2019). On the session's sidelines, ESCWA launched a [data portal](#) to provide unified data on Arab countries.

ESCWA implements 75 per cent of its statistical activities in collaboration with its partners, including United Nations agencies and regional statistical organizations. Contributions from partners consist of resources and/or in-kind contributions. Moreover, ESCWA is working on implementing the Programme on Statistics and Data with nine other United Nations entities, under the leadership of the United Nations Statistics Division. The programme provides a platform to finance regional and bilateral capacity-building activities in the field of SDG statistics and data, especially official statistics on the environment, social development, population, gender equality, economic development and institutional issues. To date, ESCWA has held 31 capacity-building workshops under the programme, and is currently preparing 24 other workshops. Moreover, ESCWA has published four studies on statistical methodologies and SDG data, and is preparing eight other studies. The programme also includes organizing bilateral technical cooperation missions aimed at following up on regional activities: 14 technical cooperation missions have already been organized, and 17 others are under preparation.

ESCWA is collaborating with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic Commission for Africa, and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs to establish a [unified SDG information system](#) aimed at ensuring consistency between various official statistical outputs on the Internet and improving timeliness.

#### **Recommendation (e)**

Provide technical support to member States in developing updated statistical strategies and support transformations in official statistics and the adoption of new data sources and types such as big data, in line with requirements for monitoring SDG achievement.

#### **Implementation**

At its thirteenth session, the ESCWA Statistical Committee considered technical and ethical issues related to transforming and updating official statistics using big data, geospatial data and new technologies. It requested ESCWA to continue efforts in that field through the practical implementation of pilot projects. Since January 2019, ESCWA had forged a partnership with the Qatar Computing Research Institute to expedite the

implementation of new technologies in the statistical field. In that context, the ESCWA secretariat is currently participating in several initiatives, including the following:

- Preparing estimates of road accidents and traffic flows using detectors and cameras, with reference to sources other than surveys: ESCWA, in collaboration with the Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics, has launched a pilot activity in Beirut. The Central Administration of Statistics and ESCWA will use data (which have not been extracted from surveys) from the Ministry of Interior, the police and other departments, in addition to telephone records. A plan has been developed to conduct another pilot activity in Dubai, in collaboration with the Dubai Statistics Centre, using a different methodology since Dubai has sensors integrated in the road network;
- Collecting price data using scanner data from distribution companies to calculate price indices:
  - 'Scanner data' are data derived directly from the internal information systems of major distribution companies;
  - The methodology was tested by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics, revealing that the best option was to combine scanner data and survey data. ESCWA will continue its research in this field and will make its findings available to countries that are interested;
- Providing data on populations living in disaster-prone areas by aligning geospatial data with partial data derived from surveys/censuses.

#### **Recommendation (f)**

Follow up, monitor and analyse Israeli policies, practices and violations of international law and submit periodic reports in that regard to member States, estimate the cumulative and long-term impact of the Israeli occupation, and conduct a comprehensive study of Israeli policies and practices over the past decades and of their interlinkages and interaction mechanisms.

#### **Implementation**

ESCWA prepared the note by the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan, for the period March 2018 - March 2019. The note will be presented to the Economic and Social Council in July 2019 and then to the General Assembly, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution [2018/20](#) and General Assembly resolution [73/255](#).

#### **Recommendation (g)**

Support innovative mechanisms adopted by the Palestinian people to face the social and economic repercussions of the Israeli occupation and its practices, especially through the following:

- (1) Analysis of household survey data, of economic and social patterns and trends resulting from Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory and of methods employed by the Palestinian people and institutions in dealing with them;
- (2) Focus on Palestinian productive sectors and their potential, and on the challenges they face under the Israeli occupation and its practices, especially in the light of Israeli policies aimed at systematically maintaining the dependence of the Palestinian economy on Israel.

## **Implementation**

ESCWA is preparing a periodic study entitled “Palestine under occupation (Issue 2): Long-term impact of the occupation on the economic and social conditions of Palestinian households 2013-2018”. The study aims to monitor Israeli policies and practices and their patterns and long-term impact in selected fields, using data from household surveys and Palestinian official data.

## **Recommendation (h)**

Continue supporting member States that so wish in developing their institutional capacity to mitigate the impact of conflict and instability and their implications for development, including through reconstruction programmes, policy formulation, priority setting and evaluation of human capacity and functional competencies that can assist in facing challenges raised by current circumstances in the Arab region and in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## **Implementation**

Under item 12 of the agenda for its sixth meeting, the Executive Committee will have before it a document on a methodology developed by ESCWA for assessing institutional capacity to support institutions in tackling weaknesses and fragilities. The document sets out key activities undertaken by ESCWA in that field, especially workshops implemented with government officials from Iraq and Yemen to adapt and apply the methodology in those two countries, and current work with the State of Palestine in that regard.

ESCWA is preparing a study entitled “Women, peace and security: Impact of conflict, occupation and political transformation on national women’s machineries in the Arab region”, which considers the capacity of national women’s machineries to adapt and be resilient in situations of conflict, occupation and transition. It presents regional experiences from Jordan, the State of Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen; and proposes various internal and external catalysts to build the capacity of national machineries to face difficulties, in line with international standards and good practices in that field.

## **Recommendation (i)**

Continue preparing the periodic report on the social and economic situation of Palestinian women and highlight the impact of occupation on their right to access basic services, economic resources and social justice, and on their empowerment to participate in the development process.

## **Implementation**

The ESCWA secretariat prepared a periodic report entitled “[Social and economic situation of Palestinian women and girls \(July 2016 - June 2018\)](#)”, which reviews key political, social, economic and human rights developments over that period in the occupied Palestinian territory. The report highlights the complex situation of women and girls, and presents key social and economic indicators on their lives in the State of Palestine. It also provides information on growing disparities in living standards between communities in the West Bank, and between those in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The ESCWA secretariat, under item 10 of the agenda for the sixth Executive Committee meeting, will present a document summarizing the report’s key findings.

## **Recommendation (j)**

Intensify resource mobilization efforts to support the activities of the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies and ensure that those additional resources complement extrabudgetary and RPTC resources that support the Centre’s work; and strengthen technical support in the field of adaptation, especially in the water and agriculture sectors, and in preparing project proposals to access available international financing.

## **Implementation**

ESCWA discussed project proposals and fields of cooperation to support the activities of the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Islamic Development Bank, at bilateral meetings held in Beirut and in Marrakech, Morocco, in the first half of 2019. Both organizations expressed interest in collaborating to implement joint activities and projects regarding the Centre over the next two years.

At the regional consultation on climate change for the 2019 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (Beirut, 21-22 March 2019), ESCWA presented the key findings of a working paper it is preparing on securing funding for climate-related activities. Those findings were also discussed at the twelfth regional training workshop on capacity development for climate change negotiations for the Arab countries, held by ESCWA in Beirut on 7 and 8 April 2019.

Regarding technical support in the field of adaptation, especially in the water and agriculture sectors, ESCWA provided training sessions as part of the Centre's activities to increase knowledge in the fields of climate change, water, agriculture and ecosystems in the Dead Sea in Jordan (5 March 2019); Kuwait City (14 March 2019); Beirut (25-27 March 2019); Cairo (31 March – 3 April 2019); and Muscat (22-23 April 2019). ESCWA also launched the [Regional Knowledge Hub](#) under the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR) to mark Earth Day and World Water Day (Cairo, 21 March – 3 April 2019), and the regional consultation on climate change for the 2019 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and High-Level Political Forum.

## **Recommendation (k)**

Continue holding regional consultations on climate change to support consensus-building and identification of priorities at the regional level on actions to address climate change under SDG 13, and refer to the outcomes of those consultations in regional preparations for the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and in regional contributions thereto.

## **Implementation**

ESCWA collaborated with the League of Arab States to hold a [regional consultation on climate change for the 2019 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and High-Level Political Forum](#), convened in Beirut on 21 and 22 March 2019. The meeting's outcome document focused on the impact of climate change and response measures to enhance resilience; interlinkages and consistency in public policies; technological innovation; and financing climate-related activities and related capacity-building efforts. The outcome document was submitted to the [2019 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development](#), held in Beirut from 9 to 11 April 2019. ESCWA also collaborated with the League of Arab States to convene a [regional consultation on the environment and natural resources for the 2019 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and High-Level Political Forum](#), held in Cairo on 27 and 28 February 2019. The consultation covered combating climate change under SDG 8, and decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation, as set out in the outcome document submitted to the 2019 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development.

At the 2019 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, ESCWA held a special session on the theme "SDG 13: Advancing climate action in the Arab region", in collaboration with the League of Arab States, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the United Nations Office for Project Services (Beirut, 9 April 2019).

**Recommendation (l)**

Conduct the regional review of the 2013 Cairo Declaration, in collaboration with the League of Arab States and the United Nations Population Fund, to be carried out in 2022; and support member States in integrating the Cairo Declaration into development planning and national reviews.

**Implementation**

ESCWA is working on the regional review of the 2013 Cairo Declaration, to be carried out in 2022, and is continuing to support member States' efforts in its implementation. For example, in Lebanon, ESCWA is providing support to the Ministry of Social Affairs in formulating a national policy on elderly persons, on the basis of an ESCWA study on their economic and social status.

**Recommendation (m)**

Support member States in integrating migration issues in development planning, in line with the goals of the Global Compact for Migration and the 2030 Agenda.

**Implementation**

ESCWA, in collaboration with the League of Arab States and the International Organization for Migration, is organizing a regional conference on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, to be held in the second half of 2019. The conference will be attended by stakeholders from the governmental and non-governmental sectors. It aims to discuss the Global Compact for Migration and ways to achieve its objectives by developing plans and policies that promote the positive impact of migration on social and economic development, and that limit its negative impact on countries of origin and host countries and on migrants themselves.

**Recommendation (n)**

Conduct regional reviews to evaluate progress pursuant to paragraph 50 of the Global Compact for Migration, beginning in 2020 and every four years thereafter.

**Implementation**

ESCWA is keeping pace with preparations and negotiations to hold an international forum on reviewing progress in migration issues in 2022. It is also working with other United Nations regional commissions to enhance regional-level roles in monitoring and review processes, in preparation for regional forums to be held in 2020.

**Recommendation (o)**

Review progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after 25 years at the regional and national levels, in coordination with the Regional Office for the Arab States of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the League of Arab States, to support Arab States in conducting national and regional reviews.

**Implementation**

ESCWA, in collaboration with the League of Arab States and UN-Women, held a [regional workshop to support member States in preparing national reviews for Beijing+25](#) (Beirut, 15-16 January 2019). ESCWA provided technical support to Jordan (Amman, 26-27 February 2019), Mauritania (Nouakchott, 25-26 March 2019), Kuwait (Kuwait City, 7-8 April 2019) and Saudi Arabia (Riyadh, 10-11 April 2019) in preparing national reviews on the issue.

ESCWA held a [consultative workshop with civil society organizations on progress made in implementing Beijing +25](#) (Beirut, 16-17 April 2019), which aimed to discuss civil society organizations' contributions to implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and to achieving related accomplishments. Participants also considered major obstacles and challenges in that regard.

**Recommendation (p)**

Continue coordinating with the International Organization for Migration and the League of Arab States through the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region; and advance knowledge creation, capacity-building and partnerships, including with other United Nations organizations, regional organizations and regional consultation processes, such as the Abu Dhabi Dialogue and the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration and Refugee Affairs.

**Implementation**

ESCWA, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration and the League of Arab States, is preparing to hold a regional conference on the Global Compact for Migration in 2019. It is coordinating with the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region in that regard, and held an expert group meeting on 15 April 2019 to discuss the situation report on international migration in the Arab region, which ESCWA periodically publishes with the Working Group.

**Recommendation (q)**

Work on incorporating member States' proposals in the proposed programme plan for the year 2020, in accordance with the Commission's mandate and available resources.

**Implementation**

The ESCWA secretariat has not received proposals on the proposed programme plan for the year 2020.

**Recommendation (r)**

Continue developing technical cooperation frameworks with member States and support stakeholders in formulating technical cooperation frameworks, especially focal points in the Technical Cooperation Network, in line with results-based development planning.

**Implementation**

ESCWA developed a technical cooperation framework with the Syrian Arab Republic, which was adopted on 3 December 2018. It also completed the formulation of a technical cooperation framework with Iraq, which it is preparing to sign. Moreover, it is consulting with Jordan and Kuwait on the final drafts for technical cooperation frameworks.

**Recommendation (s)**

Focus on training activities to build member States' capacity and on jointly evaluating those activities with beneficiaries, and document and disseminate successful experiences in collaboration with stakeholders in member States.

**Implementation**

ESCWA has organized over 30 capacity-building activities since the fifth meeting of the Executive Committee. Those activities, financed by the RPTC, included seven regional workshops, a subregional workshop, and 24 national workshops.

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