

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/23/L.1/Add.1
12 April 2005
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Twenty-third session
Damascus, 9-12 May 2005

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the twenty-third session

The inaugural meeting of the twenty-third session will begin at 5 p.m. on Monday 9 May 2005 in the Main Hall of the Conference Centre in the Umayyad Palace, Damascus. All other session meetings will be held at the Ebla Cham Palace Hotel, which is adjacent to the Conference Centre. The session is being held under the auspices of the President of the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr. Bashar Al-Asad.

2. Election of officers

Pursuant to rule 12 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, member countries shall assume the chairmanship of the session of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations. At the beginning of each session, the Commission shall elect from among the representatives of its members two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur, who shall remain in office until such time as their successors shall be elected and be eligible for re-election. The chairmanship of the twenty-second session was assumed by Egypt, while the Commission elected the representatives of Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic as Vice-Chairmen and the representative of Palestine as Rapporteur. In view of the fact that the twenty-third ESCWA session is being held away from headquarters and hosted by the Syrian Arab Republic, the normal custom in such circumstances will be observed, and the Syrian Arab Republic will assume the chairmanship of the session, while the Commission elects two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. At the twenty-fourth session, the chairmanship will revert to the country which would otherwise have assumed it at the twenty-third session by virtue of the Arabic alphabetical order, namely, Saudi Arabia.

3. Adoption of the agenda

Pursuant to rule 8 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Commission shall, at the beginning of each session, after the election of the Chairman, adopt the agenda for that session (E/ESCWA/23/L.1).

4. Proposed organization of work

The Commission has before it E/ESCWA/23/L.2, that contains proposals concerning the organization of the work of the session. The Commission may adopt it in the form in which it was submitted or make amendments thereto.

5. Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to participate as observers in the twenty-third session of the Commission

The Commission has before it E/ESCWA/23/3, concerning requests received from States Members of the United Nations and/or of the specialized agencies not members of the Commission to participate in the capacity of observer in the twenty-third session of the Commission, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV), paragraph 4, and rule 36 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. To date, Belgium and the Sudan have submitted such requests.

6. Priority issues in the Western Asia region: (E/ESCWA/23/4)

(a) *Peace and security and their impact on economic and social development*

This agenda item includes three sub-items which will deal with the following issues in three round tables:

The round table on this agenda sub-item will be attended by heads of delegation, high-level speakers and experts in international peace and security, who will consider E/ESCWA/23/4(Part I), which reviews the impact of peace and security on regional economic and social development and Arab regional integration. The round table will be chaired by one of the ministers participating in the session.

(b) *Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in ESCWA member countries*

Under this agenda sub-item, consideration will be given to E/ESCWA/23/4(Part II), which deals with the progress made by ESCWA member countries towards achieving those Goals. The document will be discussed at a round table chaired by one of the ministers participating in the session and attended by heads of delegation and United Nations organizations working in the region.

(c) *Social policies in ESCWA member countries*

This agenda sub-item will be discussed at a round table attended by representatives of ESCWA member countries and chaired by one of the ministers participating in the session. Document E/ESCWA/23/4(Part III), which refers to this sub-item, contains a comprehensive review of secretariat endeavours to provide support, through a multi-stage programme that it is implementing, for member country capacities to formulate integrated social policies for the strengthening of social and economic development. The first stage, which concerns the identification of standards for social policy success in a number of selected countries, has been completed. The above-mentioned document also deals with secretariat activities that are being carried out in cooperation with member countries as part of the second stage of the programme, with a view to ascertaining their needs in that respect.

7. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission

The Commission has before it the report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission (E/ESCWA/23/5), which appraises the Commission of the activities that have been undertaken since the twenty-second session of the Commission. This agenda item includes the following sub-items:

(a) *Implementation of 2004-2005 biennium regular budget activities (E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I))*

The document submitted under this agenda item comprises four parts, which deal with the progress made in 2004 in implementing the programme of work; follow-up to implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-second session; follow-up action at the regional level to United Nations international conferences; and reports of the sessions of Commission subcommittees held during the 2004-2005 biennium.

(i) *Progress made in 2004*

E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.1 covers the progress made in 2004 in the framework of the programme of work for the current biennium. It reviews ESCWA achievements in the six subprogrammes and the amendments made to the programme of work for the 2004-2005 biennium and agreed by member countries.

(ii) *Follow-up to implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-second session*

The following annexes to document E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2 cover the progress achieved in implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-second session:

- a. Consideration of the establishment within ESCWA of a United Nations Arabic language centre: resolution 239(XXII), E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.1;
- b. The establishment within ESCWA of a committee on women: resolution 240 (XXII), E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.2;
- c. The impact of the lack of stability in the Arab region on economic and social development: resolution 241 (XXII), E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.3;
- d. The amendments made to the revised programme of work for the biennium 2002-2003: resolution 242 (XXII), E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.4;
- e. Adoption of the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq: resolution 243 (XXII), E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.5;
- f. Cooperation between ESCWA member countries with respect to shared water resources and the Arab network for the integrated management of water resources: resolution 244 (XXII), E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.6;
- g. The ESCWA initiative for activating the role of science, technology and technological innovation in achieving the Millennium Development Goals: resolution 245 (XXII), E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.7;
- h. The formulation of a regional plan of action for the information society: resolution 246 (XXII), E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.8;
- i. The development of statistical work in the ESCWA region: resolution 247 (XXII), E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.9;

- j. The participation of ESCWA member countries in the international comparison programme: resolution 248 (XXII), E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.10;
- k. Strengthening consultancy services and technical cooperation activities in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia: resolution 249 (XXII), E/ESCWA/23/5 (Part I)/Add.2/Supp.11;
- l. Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005: resolution 251 (XXII), E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.12;
- m. Rehabilitation and economic and social reconstruction in Palestine: resolution 252 (XXII), E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.13.

(iii) *Follow-up action at the regional level to United Nations international conferences*

E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.3 details the role assumed by the secretariat with respect to follow-up action at the regional level to United Nations international conferences since the twenty-second ESCWA session. ESCWA has contributed to follow-up action at the regional level to the following nine international conferences, which appear in chronological order:

- a. The eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development;
- b. The World Summit on the Information Society;
- c. Fifth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization;
- d. The World Summit on Sustainable Development;
- e. The International Conference on Financing for Development;
- f. The Fourth World Conference on Women;
- g. The World Summit for Social Development;
- h. The International Conference on Population and Development;
- i. The tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

(iv) *Reports of the sessions of Commission subcommittees E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.4*

This document comprises nine reports of the sessions of the seven Commission subcommittees that were held in the biennium 2004-2005. The reports, which include the recommendations made by those bodies, are the following:

- a. The report of the Committee on Women on its first session (E/ESCWA/WOM/2003/IG.1/9);
- b. The report of the Committee on Transport on its fifth session (E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/7);
- c. The report of the Committee on Women on its second session (E/ESCWA/WOM/2004/IG.1/6);
- d. The report of the Statistical Committee on its sixth session (E/ESCWA/SCU/2004/IG.1/6);
- e. The report of the Committee on Energy on its fifth session (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2004/IG.1/7);

- f. The report of the Committee on Water Resources on its sixth session (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2004/IG.2/6);
- g. The report of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region on its fourth session (E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.2/5);
- h. The report of the Committee on Transport on its sixth session (E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/5);
- i. The report of the Committee on Social Development on its fifth session (E/ESCWA/SDD/2004/IG.1/12).

The Commission is requested to approve the recommendations made in those reports.

(b) *The financial and budgetary position*

E/ESCWA/23/5(Part II) contains a review of the various financial aspects of the Commission programme. It covers the regular budget, extrabudgetary resources and the ESCWA development account, which receives donations. ESCWA makes every endeavour to urge individual countries and donor funds, organizations and institutions to increase their contributions, in order to make it possible to deal with emergency situations in the region, particularly in view of the fact that ESCWA is the regional commission that receives the fewest voluntary contributions or extrabudgetary resources. The secretariat therefore hopes that countries and individuals will announce their support for ESCWA activities and projects.

(c) *The technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services E/ESCWA/23/5(Part III)*

The Commission will consider this sub-item on the basis of three documents, namely, E/ESCWA/23/5(Part III)/Add.1, which presents a brief review of the progress made in implementing extrabudgetary technical cooperation activities and projects and the services provided by the ESCWA regional advisers to member countries during the 2004-2005 biennium; E/ESCWA/23/5(Part III)/Add.2, which covers the technical cooperation strategy that was prepared by the ESCWA secretariat in conformity with the reform efforts being undertaken by the United Nations and with the aim of clarifying the strategic position of ESCWA with respect to technical cooperation activities and strengthening and making such activities more effective, in addition to specifying the principles essential to their success and the challenges that can obstruct their implementation; and E/ESCWA/23/5(Part III)/Add.3, which details the regular budget technical cooperation activities implemented by ESCWA in the 2002-2003 biennium.

(d) *Recommendations of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services on its audit of the regional commissions*

The Commission will consider this sub-item on the basis of E/ESCWA/23/5(Part IV), which contains the recommendations made in the report of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on its audit of the five regional commissions and the comments made by the ESCWA secretariat in response to the recommendations concerning its programme of work, for information. The OIOS report on its audit evaluates the efficiency and effectiveness of the five regional commissions in managing programmes and in respect of administrative organization, and sheds light on the areas common to all the commissions that are in need of the special attention of their administrative and legislative bodies.

8. General debate: issues of which the twenty-third session is seized

This agenda item was allocated for the interventions of member countries with respect to all ESCWA activities, agenda items and other issues that countries wish to introduce and express their views on. The opinions expressed by heads of delegation will be taken into consideration by the secretariat when formulating its forthcoming programmes.

9. Adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq

The Commission will consider this item on the basis of E/ESCWA/23/6, which summarizes the various stages through which the memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq passed before reaching the final version, as draft resolution 254, in which it is submitted to the Commission for adoption (E/ESCWA/23/RES/L.254). The memorandum will be open for signature at the ceremony planned for the first working day of the twenty-third ESCWA session. It will remain open throughout the session, namely, from 9 to 12 May 2005, for signature by the representatives of member countries who are authorized to sign and hold credentials signed by the relevant Head of State or Government or minister for foreign affairs. This is in accordance with the procedure adopted by the Office of Legal Affairs in New York.

10. Draft programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007

In respect of this agenda item, the Commission will have before it E/ESCWA/23/7, which contains the draft programme of work and priorities for the biennium 2006-2007 and reviews the priorities and goals set for the preceding biennium, the activities and expected outcomes of the seven subprogrammes undertaken by ESCWA, and indicators of success.

11. Cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States

The Commission will consider this item on the basis of E/ESCWA/23/8, which details the main cooperation activities being undertaken by ESCWA with the League of Arab States. It also sets forth proposals concerning a number of measures designed to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the two parties in respect of several activities that have high priority for member countries.

12. Date and venue of the twenty-fourth session of the Commission

Rule 1, paragraph (a) of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia provides that sessions of the Commission shall be held normally in April every other year, at a time to be determined by the members of the Commission. It has so happened that Commission sessions have been held in odd years. E/ESCWA/23/9 considers the feasibility of continuing this pattern in the light of the new arrangements adopted by the United Nations General Assembly with respect to programme planning, which mean that Commission sessions will have to be held in even years. The aforementioned document proposes a tentative schedule for the convening of Commission sessions and intergovernmental technical committees for 2006-2009.

13. Other business

This item covers any other issue which the members of the Commission may wish to discuss.

14. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its twenty-third session

The Commission will consider the draft report on its twenty-third session (E/ESCWA/23/L.9) and adopt both the report and the draft resolutions.
