

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/25/1/Add.1
5 June 2008
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Twenty-fifth session
Sana'a, 26-29 May 2008

Item 3 of the agenda

ANNOTATED AGENDA

1. Opening of the twenty-fifth session

The twenty-fifth session of the Commission will comprise two segments, namely, the senior officials' segment, which will be inaugurated at 10 a.m. on Monday 26 May 2008 in the main Conference Hall in the Mövenpick Hotel, Sana'a; and the ministerial segment, which will be inaugurated at 10 a.m. on Wednesday 28 May 2008 under the auspices of Mr. Ali Abdullah Salih, the President of Yemen. All meetings of the session will be held in the Mövenpick Hotel, Sana'a.

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 sessions 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 a Chairman, 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-fourth session was assumed by Saudi Arabia, while the Commission elected the representatives of Bahrain and Egypt as Vice-Chairmen and the representative of Palestine as Rapporteur. Pursuant to the aforementioned rule, Yemen will assume the chairmanship of the twenty-fifth session.

3. Adoption of the agenda

Pursuant to the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, rule 8, the Commission shall, at the beginning of each session, after the election of the Chairman, adopt the agenda for that session. The provisional agenda was drawn up by the Executive Secretary of ESCWA in consultation with the Chairman of the twenty-fourth session and the technical committee, a body composed of senior officials from member countries which held its first meeting in Beirut on 16 and 17 January 2008. The Commission is invited to adopt the provisional agenda (E/ESCWA/25/L.1).

4. Proposed organization of work

The Commission will have before it document E/ESCWA/25/L.2, which 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-fifth session of the Commission

The Commission will have before it document E/ESCWA/25/3, concerning requests received from States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of the Commission to participate in the capacity of observer in the twenty-fifth session of the Commission, in accordance with Economic and Social Council Resolution 1818 (LV), paragraph 4, and the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, rule 63.

6. Policy issues in the ESCWA region (E/ESCWA/25/4)

This agenda item consists of two salient issues for the ESCWA region which will be considered by the Commission in two roundtable discussions:

(a) *Financing for development in the ESCWA region*

During its first meeting, which was held in Beirut on 16 and 17 January 2008, the technical committee agreed to the proposals made by the secretariat regarding the theme of the twenty-fifth session of the Commission. Following that, the issue of financing for development in the ESCWA region was adopted as a principal theme for the session.

The Commission introduced that theme in view of its importance to the countries of the region, particularly in the context of preparations for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, which is scheduled to be held in Doha from 29 November to 2 December 2008. United Nations regional commissions were requested to provide assistance to member countries in their preparations for that significant conference.

Financing for development will be the theme of a roundtable discussion with the participation of heads of delegations and high-level speakers and experts, who will discuss a report on the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in member countries, as presented in document E/ESCWA/25/4(Part I)/A. The report reviews the progress achieved by member countries in implementing the Monterrey Consensus, which was adopted at the International Conference on Financing for Development that was held in Monterrey, Mexico, from 18 to 22 March 2002, and the problems faced by those countries in implementing the leading actions of the Consensus in various fields, namely: (a) mobilizing domestic financial resources for development; (b) mobilizing international resources for development; (c) international trade as an engine for development; (d) increasing financial and technical cooperation for development; (e) external debt; (f) enhancing the coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems in support of development. The report also includes recommendations addressed to decision-makers in member countries regarding the various leading actions stipulated in the Monterrey Consensus, in order to assist countries in taking decisions and actions deemed necessary for implementing those actions.

As part of the initiatives that ESCWA took in order to encourage financing for development in the region and assist member countries in implementing the Monterrey Consensus, the Commission will have before it document E/ESCWA/25/4(Part I)/B, which is a report on the

regional preparatory meeting that took place on 29 and 30 April 2008 for countries participating in the Follow-up International Conference. The report deals with the recommendations and conclusions reached at the preparatory expert group meeting on various issues related to financing for development. It also includes a draft declaration on the priorities of member countries and the most important issues upon which they should focus during the Follow-up International Conference, including the challenges that they face in securing the necessary financial resources for economic development.

(b) *Regional cooperation for achieving the Millennium Development Goals*

The Commission will consider this issue in a roundtable discussion in which heads of delegations, and high-level speakers and experts will participate.

The secretariat will present two documents to the roundtable, the first one, "Strengthening regional cooperation for achieving the Millennium Development Goals" (E/ESCWA/25/4 (Part II)/A), focuses on a set of policies and proposals aimed at strengthening regional cooperation amongst member countries with a view to accelerating the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It outlines the current state of regional cooperation in the region and points out ways of extending such cooperation in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Furthermore, it addresses the experience of other regions in cooperation for development that may be useful, particularly in the fields of health, education and the environment.

The second document presented by the secretariat (E/ESCWA/25/4(Part II)/B) includes a review of current directions and an assessment of the progress achieved in realizing the Millennium Development Goals in Arab Countries, especially given that 2007 marked the half-way point in the period between the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000 and the deadline of 2015 for achieving the Goals. It also addresses the most significant obstacles and challenges that have impeded achievement of the Goals, particularly those faced by the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and countries suffering from conflict, and proposes recommendations for accelerating their achievement by 2015.

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

The Commission will have before it the report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission (E/ESCWA/25/5), which comprises the following six parts:

(a) *Programme performance report for the biennium 2006-2007*

Under this sub-item, the Commission will have before it document E/ESCWA/25/5(Part I), which presents a general evaluation of the work programme performance of ESCWA for the biennium 2006-2007, highlights the results achieved in the seven subprogrammes and sheds light on the obstacles and challenges that were faced in their implementation. It also includes the amendments introduced into the work programme. The Commission is requested to review the document and give guidance regarding the general performance of the seven subprogrammes.

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

Under this agenda sub-item, the Commission will have before it document E/ESCWA/25/5(Part II), which contains a report on follow-up to the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-fourth session, which was held in Beirut from

8 to 11 March 2006, concerning the various issues and themes of importance to member countries and the fields upon which the work of the Commission is focused. The resolutions are listed as follows:

- (i) The role of ESCWA in the light of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document and the subsequent change process: resolution 269 (XXIV);
- (ii) Macroeconomic policy for financial stability: resolution 270 (XXIV);
- (iii) Strengthening the role of ESCWA in addressing the impact of conflict and instability within the context of social and economic development: resolution 271 (XXIV);
- (iv) Youth employment in ESCWA member countries: resolution 272 (XXIV);
- (v) Follow-up to the development of the Information Society in Western Asia: resolution 273 (XXIV);
- (vi) The establishment of the ESCWA Technology Centre: resolution 274 (XXIV);
- (vii) Technical cooperation, partnership development and resource mobilization: resolution 275 (XXIV);
- (viii) Strengthening statistical capacities in the ESCWA region: resolution 276 (XXIV);
- (ix) Social development policies: resolution 277 (XXIV);
- (x) Increasing the role of women in decision-making with respect to conflict prevention and peace building: resolution 278 (XXIV);
- (xi) Follow-up to implementation of components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq: resolution 279 (XXIV).

The Commission is requested to take note of what has been accomplished in the implementation of those resolutions since the twenty-fourth session.

Pursuant to resolution 275 (XXIV) on Technical cooperation, partnership development and resource mobilization, the secretariat prepared a specific plan of action on the development of partnerships and the mobilization of resources, contained in the document E/ESCWA/25/5 (Part II)/Supp.1. The Commission is called upon to adopt that plan of action with a view to its implementation.

Moreover, the secretariat will present to the Commission a background document entitled "Report on ways of strengthening the role of national statistical organizations in applying the basic principles of official statistics issued by the United Nations" (E/ESCWA/25/5(Part II)/Supp.2), in the context of follow-up to the implementation of Resolution 276 (XXIV) on Strengthening statistical capacities in the ESCWA region and the implementation of the recommendations that the Statistical Committee made during its sixth session, which was held in Beirut from 7 to 9 November 2006.

(c) *Follow-up to the establishment of an Arabic language centre at ESCWA*

The Commission will have before it document E/ESCWA/25/5(Part III), which contains the measures taken by the secretariat pursuant to ESCWA resolution 239 (XXII) regarding the consideration of the establishment of an Arabic language centre at ESCWA, and the progress achieved in that regard. It also contains a review of the outcomes of the expert group meeting on

the topic that was held in Beirut on 2 and 3 May 2007 with a view to defining the nature, goals and activities of the centre. The annex to the document comprises an executive summary of the project document for establishing the centre.

The secretariat will distribute the report of the expert group meeting as contained in document E/ESCWA/OES/2007/EGM.1/8 and the complete project document (E/ESCWA/25/5/CRP.1). The Commission is requested to take note of the recommendations present in the report and give guidance on the measures to be taken for implementing the project document.

(d) *Technical cooperation programme (E/ESCWA/25/5(Part IV))*

This sub-item includes the conduct of a comprehensive review of the technical cooperation activities undertaken by ESCWA with funding from the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation and the United Nations Development Account. Under this sub-item, the Commission will have before it two documents. The first one (E/ESCWA/25/5(Part IV)/Add.1) addresses the results of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation which aims to contribute to capacity building of member countries by organizing training activities and offering consultancy services and technical advice in formulating policies, strategies and plans of action in various specializations. It also addresses the outcomes of activities undertaken upon the request of member countries, as part of the ESCWA Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation and Technical Cooperation Strategy and related expected achievements. The second document (E/ESCWA/25/5(Part IV)/Add.2) outlines the results achieved in the implementation of intra-regional and interregional projects funded by the United Nations Development Account. The progress made in this regard is linked to expected achievements under the seven ESCWA subprogrammes.

The Commission is requested to take note of those accomplishments and results.

(e) *Financial status of the Commission*

The Commission will have before it document E/ESCWA/25/5(Part V), which reviews the various financial aspects of the programmes of the Commission, including the regular budget, extrabudgetary resources and the ESCWA Trust Fund for Regional Activities. The secretariat invites member countries, and donor funds, organizations and agencies to contribute to the extrabudgetary resources in order to support the activities and projects of ESCWA and enable it to continue meeting the increasing demands and needs of member countries.

(f) *Reports of the ESCWA subsidiary bodies on their sessions (E/ESCWA/25/5(Part VI))*

The Commission will have before it the complete reports of the seven subsidiary bodies on their sessions which were held between the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth sessions of the Commission. In addition to the recommendations, the reports cover the issues discussed, information on the organization of those sessions, lists of participants and documents presented therein. Those reports are:

- (i) Report of the Statistical Committee on its seventh session, E/ESCWA/SCU/2006/IG.1/12;
- (ii) Report of the Committee on Energy on its sixth session, E/ESCWA/SDPD/2007/IG.1/7;
- (iii) Report of the Committee on Social Development on its sixth session, E/ESCWA/SDD/2007/IG.1/8;

- (iv) Report of the Committee on Women on its third session, E/ESCWA/ECW/2007/IG.1/7;
- (v) Report of the Committee on Water Resources on its seventh session, E/ESCWA/SDPD/2007/IG.2/7;
- (vi) Report of the Committee on Transport on its eighth session, E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/IG.1/5;
- (vii) Report of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region on its fifth session, E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/IG.2/7;
- (viii) Report of the Committee on Transport on its ninth session, E/ESCWA/GRID/2008/IG.1/7;

The Commission is invited to endorse recommendations.

8. Management Issues (E/ESCWA/25/6)

(a) *Streamlining the work of the Commission (E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I))*

- (i) *Lessons learned from the evaluation of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies*

The Commission will have before it document E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I)/Add.1 on the outcome of the evaluation of 18 sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, held between March 2004 and December 2007. The seven ESCWA subsidiary bodies are: the Committee on Water Resources, the Committee on Energy, the Committee on Social Development, the Committee on Transport, the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region, the Statistical Committee and the Committee on Women. The Commission is requested to consider the observations and recommendations of the evaluation and to give guidance thereon.

- (ii) *Frequency of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies*

The Commission will have before it document E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I)/Add.2, which contains the present schedule of sessions of the Commission and its seven subsidiary bodies, and a proposal to reconsider the frequency of those sessions based on comments made by representatives of member countries in their assessment of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. Pursuant to ESCWA resolution 228 (XXI) of 11 May 2001 on changing the timing of the sessions of the subsidiary bodies, all these subsidiary bodies, with the exception of the Committee on Transport, hold their meetings on a biennial basis. In line with ESCWA resolution 229 (XXI) of 11 May 2001 the Committee on Transport holds annual sessions. Article 1 of the ESCWA Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure states that the Commission should hold its regular sessions biannually in April on a date set by Commission members. The Commission is requested to convey its comments and guidance regarding the proposals of the secretariat to change the frequency of the sessions of ESCWA and its subsidiary bodies.

- (iii) *First meeting of the Technical Committee*

The commission will have before it document E/ESCWA/2008/C.I/4, which comprises the report of the technical committee on its first meeting, that was held in Beirut on 16 and 17 January 2008 and which was attended by senior officials from member countries. ESCWA

organized that meeting pursuant to the decision made at its twenty-fourth session, calling for the formation of a technical committee, to be composed of senior officials from member countries, to meet once every six months at ESCWA headquarters with the aim of following up the implementation of programme activities and ensuring direct and continuous coordination and communication between the secretariat and member countries. The Commission is requested to take note of the outcome of that meeting and make comments thereon.

(b) *Proposed amendments to the work programme for the biennium 2008-2009*

The Commission will have before it document E/ESCWA/25/6(Part II), which contains the proposed amendments to the work programme for the biennium 2008-2009 in the light of unexpected issues at the global and regional levels. The Commission is requested to consider the proposed amendments to the work programme and, if in agreement, adopt them.

(c) *Revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2010-2011*

The Commission will consider the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2010-2011, contained in document E/ESCWA/25/6(Part III). The revised draft comprises an overview of the work programme and a review of goals and expected achievements for each of the seven subprogrammes. In preparing the revised draft strategic framework, the secretariat took into consideration new priorities at the global and regional levels and the amendments proposed by member countries at the first meeting of the technical committee.

The Commission is requested to review the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2010-2011, give guidance regarding that revised draft and adopt it.

The Commission will also have before it document E/ESCWA/2008/WG/C.1/4, which contains the report of the Expert Group Meeting on Fostering Sustainable Development through Regional Integration in the Arab Region: A Strategic Vision for 2010-2020, which was held in Beirut on 15 and 16 January 2008, preceding the first meeting of the technical committee.

The Expert Group Meeting addressed development issues that are currently of concern at the regional and global levels and directly influence the future of the Arab region. It also addressed existing and expected social, economic and political challenges to the Arab region in the context of current global developments. In preparing a strategic vision for the Arab region to 2020, ESCWA derives guidance from the outcome and recommendations of the Meeting, focuses on the priorities of countries in the region and takes into consideration the emerging global and regional challenges and the main issues on the United Nations agenda. The Commission is requested to take note of the outcome of the Meeting and provide comments thereon.

9. Draft convention on international multimodal transport of goods in the Arab Mashreq

The Commission will have before it document E/ESCWA/25/7, which reviews the different stages through which the convention on international multimodal transport of goods in the Arab Mashreq passed before arriving at its final form, which is presented to the Commission as a draft resolution for adoption. The convention will be opened for signature during the forthcoming celebration of its drafting, which will take place on 28 May 2008, immediately following the opening of the ministerial meeting. It will remain open for signature throughout the session for the representatives of member countries who are duly authorized to sign the convention and provided with credentials endorsed and signed by heads of State or Government or foreign ministers, in accordance with principles and procedures in force at the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs.

10. Consideration of the request for membership in the Commission by the Sudan

The Commission will have before it document E/ESCWA/25/8, which contains the request by the Sudan for membership in the Commission. Since 12 May 2005, following the decision of the Commission made during its twenty-third session, which was held in Damascus from 9 to 12 May 2005, regarding a request made by the Sudan on that matter, Sudan has participated in ESCWA meetings and activities as an observer.

Pursuant to the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the country desiring membership in the Commission must present that request formally, the ministerial Commission of ESCWA must discuss it, and the Commission must submit a recommendation either accepting or refusing the request to the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

The secretariat distributed the request that it had received from the Sudan to member countries in preparation for its consideration during the current session. The request will be considered by the Commission and a recommendation will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council.

11. Date and venue of the twenty-sixth 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 the regular sessions of the Commission shall be held in April every two years, at a time to be determined by the members of the Commission. Subject to an invitation of a member country of the Commission to host the twenty-sixth session of ESCWA, it is expected that the Commission will decide to hold its twenty-sixth session in Beirut during the month of April 2010, pending the discussions of the Commission and the resolution that it will adopt under item 8 (a-ii) of the agenda, entitled "Frequency of the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission".

12. Other business

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

13. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its twenty-fifth session

The Commission will consider the draft report on its twenty-fifth session (E/ESCWA/25/L.10) and adopt both the report and the draft resolutions.
