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

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

Item 8 (b) of the provisional agenda

**MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE WORK PROGRAMME  
FOR THE BIENNIUM 2008-2009**

**Summary**

This document presents proposed amendments to the work programme for the biennium 2008-2009. These changes are based on the new mandates that emanated from the sixty-second session of the General Assembly and the global and regional needs and challenges that have emerged since the Commission adopted the draft programme of work for 2008-2009 at its twenty-fourth session.

The Commission is invited to consider the proposed changes with a view to endorsing them for incorporation into the programme of work for the biennium 2008-2009.

## CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction .....	1-3	3
<i>Chapter</i>		
<b>I. IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF THE MANDATES OF THE DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ACTIVITIES OF ESCWA .....</b>	4-9	3
<b>II. AMENDMENTS PROPOSED BY THE SECRETARIAT .....</b>	10-11	4
<b>III. PROPOSED PROGRAMME AMENDMENTS IN THE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2008-2009 .....</b>	12	4

## Introduction

1. This document presents proposed amendments to the work programme for 2008-2009. These changes are based on the new mandates that emanated from the sixty-second session of the General Assembly and from the global and regional needs and challenges that have emerged since the Commission adopted the draft programme of work for 2008-2009 at its twenty-fourth session. The major changes result from the comprehensive proposal of the Secretary-General to the resumed sixty-second session of the General Assembly, which aims to improve the effective and efficient delivery of the mandates of the development-related activities of the United Nations Secretariat, including those of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).
2. This document also includes minor changes proposed by the secretariat, which are mainly concentrated on a reduction in the number and periodicity of information materials, including booklets, pamphlets and newsletters.
3. The Commission is invited to consider the proposed changes, the background to which is explained in two parts, namely, (a) improving the effective and efficient delivery of the mandates of the development-related activities of ESCWA; and (b) the proposals of the secretariat for changes, with a view to endorsing them for incorporation into the programme of work for the biennium 2008-2009.<sup>1</sup>

### **I. IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF THE MANDATES OF THE DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ACTIVITIES OF ESCWA**

4. The General Assembly, in reviewing the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, recognized that the development pillar of the work of the United Nations was provided with insufficient resources, while aiming at an ambitious agenda.<sup>2</sup> The General Assembly therefore requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive proposal for its consideration in the first part of its resumed sixty-second session, with a view to improving the effective and efficient delivery of the mandates of the development-related activities of the United Nations Secretariat, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, ESCWA and the other regional commissions.<sup>3</sup>
5. Accordingly, ESCWA submitted its proposal, based on the outcome of a series of consultations held between the Executive Secretary and member countries during his country visits and on the mandate review that has been carried out continuously by the secretariat since 2005.
6. The proposal made by ESCWA is to strengthen the following programme priority areas: (a) regional tracking of the Millennium Development Goals and identification of lacunae; (b) climate change issues; (c) the preparation of an in-depth socio-economic analysis, focusing on the needs of the poor and the marginalized; (d) an increased focus on the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus; (e) the promotion of technology for development through South-South cooperation; and (f) gender statistics.
7. To enhance knowledge and information-sharing and promote multidisciplinary research activities, ESCWA will introduce a series of working papers through which the secretariat will be able to disseminate research findings and possible policy recommendations on key emerging development issues. Redoubling its efforts to interact with member countries in supporting the development of national policies and programmes, a series of seminars will be held to provide national Government officials with an opportunity to discuss policy implications arising from ESCWA research.

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<sup>1</sup> The changes related to Part I are conditional on the approval of the General Assembly of the proposal of the Secretary-General.

<sup>2</sup> The three main pillars of the United Nations are peace and security, development and human rights.

<sup>3</sup> A/RES/62/236, paragraph 73.

8. Collaboration between ESCWA and the League of Arab States will be further enhanced by addressing climate change issues to support the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) and the Council of Arab Ministers of Electricity in the implementation of the Arab Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change, which was adopted by CAMRE in December 2007, and the Bali Roadmap that was the outcome of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali.

9. Additional output arising from the proposal of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly is identified with a single asterisk (\*) in the table below. Since these changes have additional regular budget implications, this output can be implemented upon the approval of the General Assembly to provide commensurate resources. During the current session, the Commission will be advised by the secretariat on the outcome of the consideration by the General Assembly of the proposal of the Secretary-General, which includes additional output from ESCWA.

## II. AMENDMENTS PROPOSED BY THE SECRETARIAT

10. The amendments proposed by the secretariat are concentrated mainly on a reduction in the number and periodicity of information materials, including booklets, pamphlets and newsletters. The resources released will be used to enhance the quality and presentation of priority information materials.

11. The decision of the Commission on the change in frequency of intergovernmental sessions, considered under item 8 (a-ii) of the provisional agenda, may also have further programmatic and financial implications, in which case the Commission will be advised of this by the secretariat at the current session.

## III. PROPOSED PROGRAMME AMENDMENTS IN THE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2008-2009

12. The following matrix provides the proposed programme amendments, itemized by subprogramme.

Activity	Status				Justification
	Terminated	Added	Reformulated	Postponed	
<b>Subprogramme 1. Integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development</b>					
<i>Assistance to intergovernmental bodies and/or United Nations representatives/rapporteurs and their established mandates</i>					
Substantive support to the Executive Secretariat of the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR) of ESCWA, the United Nations Environment Programme and the League of Arab States; and the Council of Arab Ministers of Electricity		2			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
<i>Expert group meetings (EGMs)</i>					
EGMs on emerging climate issues of relevance to the region		2			
<i>Non-recurrent publications</i>					
Approaches for improving energy efficiency in the downstream energy subsectors in ESCWA member countries	1				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
League of Arab States and ESCWA joint study on the effect of peace and security on the environment and sustainable development in the Arab region	1				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.

Activity	Status				Justification
	Terminated	Added	Reformulated	Postponed	
<i>Technical material</i>					
Working paper series on issues related to integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development*		1			
<i>Field projects</i>					
Revolving microcredit fund for agriculture and agrobusiness in South Lebanon		1			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
Initiative on technology, employment and poverty alleviation in ESCWA member countries		1			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
<b>Total for Subprogramme 1:</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Subprogramme 2. Integrated social policies</b>					
<i>Expert group meetings</i>					
Joint meeting of national experts in the fields of economic and social development on key social policy issues*		1			
<i>Technical material</i>					
Working paper series on issues related to social development policies*		1			
Facilitation and support for the Social Development Network (SDNet)	2				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
Guide to the identification and collection of social development indicators in the ESCWA region	1				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
Social policy briefs	2				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
Social policy country profile: Egypt	1				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
<i>Training courses, seminars and workshops</i>					
Training of Palestinian trainers in social participatory development		1			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
<i>Field projects</i>					
Promoting social policy dialogue in the Sudan		1			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
<b>Total for Subprogramme 2:</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

Activity	Status				Justification
	Terminated	Added	Reformulated	Postponed	
<b>Subprogramme 3. Economic development and integration</b>					
<i>Recurrent publications</i>					
Economic trends and impacts, issue no. 5	1				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
<i>Technical material</i>					
Working paper series on economic development and integration*		1			
Learning from best practice in Islamic banking in Asia	1				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
Regional investment directory	1				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
Regional economic forecasts	2				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
<i>Training courses, seminars and workshops</i>					
Seminars on policy implications of the outcome of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus*		3			
Seminars on policy options recommended in the annual survey of economic and social developments in the ESCWA region*		2			
Seminar on the findings of the Millennium Development Goals regional report*		1			
<b>Total for Subprogramme 3:</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Subprogramme 4. Information and communications technology for regional integration</b>					
<i>Expert group meetings</i>					
EGM on the promotion of South-South cooperation in technology transfer*		1			
<i>Technical material</i>					
Working paper series on issues related to technology transfer*		1			
<b>Total for Subprogramme 4:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Subprogramme 5. Statistics for evidence-based policymaking</b>					
<i>Non-recurrent publications</i>					
Study on international trade: sources, methods, and conceptual framework in the ESCWA region	1				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.

Activity	Status				Justification
	Terminated	Added	Reformulated	Postponed	
<i>Booklets, fact sheets, wall charts and information kits</i>					
Information kits on the work of ESCWA in the field of statistics, including one for the Statistical Committee	1				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
The statistical system in the ESCWA region	2				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
<i>Technical material</i>					
Maintenance of the International Merchandise Trade Statistics database		2			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
<i>Training courses, seminars and workshops</i>					
Seminars on selected statistical issues for heads of National Statistical Offices in the ESCWA region		1			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
Seminars on knowledge-sharing for the development of gender statistics*		2			
<i>Field projects</i>					
Needs assessment for capacity-building of National Statistical Offices in the ESCWA region		1			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
Towards more gender-sensitive monitoring and reporting of the Millennium Development Goals in the ESCWA region		1			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
<b>Total for Subprogramme 5:</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Subprogramme 6. Advancement of women</b>					
<i>Parliamentary documentation</i>					
Key issues concerning the advancement of women in the Arab region	1				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
<i>Non-recurrent publications</i>					
Revised guidelines on increasing the effectiveness of national machineries for women in the ESCWA region				1	<b>Postponed at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
<i>Booklets, fact sheets, wall charts and information kits</i>					
Information kit on the advancement of women in the ESCWA region: perspective and potential. To be distributed at the fifty-second and fifty-third sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women	1				<b>Terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
E-magazine for Arab women	6				<b>Six of the twelve issues will be terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
ESCWA Centre for Women gender newsletter	16				<b>Sixteen of the twenty-four issues will be terminated at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
<b>Total for Subprogramme 6:</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	

Activity	Status				Justification
	Terminated	Added	Reformulated	Postponed	
<b>Subprogramme 7. Conflict mitigation and development</b>					
<i>Field projects</i>					
E-caravan-Phoenix project		1			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes. Continuous from the previous biennium.
Smart Community Project for Iraq		1			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes. Continuous from the previous biennium.
Iraqi Networking Academies (INA) Project Phase II		1			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes. Continuous from the previous biennium.
Capacity-building and institutional strengthening of the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works		1			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes.
Strengthening the capacity of the housing sector (Phase II)		1			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes. Continuous from the previous biennium.
Governance in support of employment creation		1			<b>Added at the initiative of the secretariat</b> for programmatic purposes. Continuous from the previous biennium.
<b>Total for Subprogramme 7:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>ESCWA GRAND TOTAL:</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	

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