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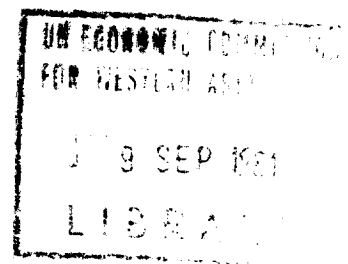
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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

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Item 6(a) of the provisional agenda



Progress Report on the implementation of the
work programme

(Note of the Executive Secretary)

Progress made in the implementation of the work programme

1. The secretariat considered it appropriate to change the format of its reporting on the progress made in the implementation of the Commission's work programme, differentiating—as far as this was possible—between its programme of research, studies and meetings (E/ECWA/120) and its technical co-operation activities (E/ECWA/120/Add.2). The secretariat believes further that its reporting on progress should provide an opportunity to highlight and bring to the attention of the member States important programme issues. This concept for progress reports will be further developed in the future. The secretariat decided also to bring to the attention of member States those activities programmed in the 1980-1981 biennium which have been terminated on the ground that they were considered obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective (E/ECWA/120/Add.1). In the paragraphs below, some general remarks are made on these three dimensions of the Commission's work programme.

2. The implementation of the Commission's programme of research studies and meetings was characterized by a steady progress in the delivery of the outputs as planned and programmed in the Commission's revised programme of work and priorities, 1980-1981 (E/ECWA/90). However, progress has been affected by a number of factors, such as the particular situation of the Commission in connexion with its forthcoming relocation to Baghdad and the number of vacant posts within the secretariat. With regard to the latter, the secretariat has been intensifying its efforts to fill such posts. It is expected that the situation will improve considerably during 1981.

3. In the report (E/ECWA/120) the secretariat made references to the most important programme issues connected with the implementation of the Commission's work programme. For easy reference, these issues are listed below:

- (a) The need to upgrade the secretariat's capabilities in the field of modelling, following the discontinuation of temporary assistance provided by the United Nations from the Trust Fund for Development Planning and Projections (ibid., para. 16);

(b) The need to resort to special measures in favour of the least developed countries of the ECWA region in preparation for the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to be held in September 1981 (ibid., para. 19 and E/ECWA/127);

(c) The need to establish electronic data processing services so as, inter alia, to upgrade the secretariat's statistical services (E/ECWA/120, para. 86 and E/ECWA/117/Add.1, para. 11).

4. The secretariat wishes particularly to bring to the attention of member States the following meetings to be held during 1981 and for which substantive preparations have taken place during the period under review.

- (i) Working Group on Foreign Trade and Industrial Statistics, 23-27 March 1981, Beirut, Lebanon (E/ECWA/120, para. 89).
- (ii) Conference on International Migration in the Arab States 11-16 May 1981, Beirut, Lebanon (ibid., para. 67).
- (iii) Expert Meeting on Management, Conservation and Development of Agricultural Resources, 9-15 May 1981, Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic (ibid., para. 7).
- (iv) Seminar on Technology Policies in the Arab States, 25-29 May 1981, Beirut, Lebanon (ibid., para. 75).
- (v) Expert Group Meeting on the Petrochemical Industries, 10-12 June 1981, Vienna, Austria (ibid., 33). This meeting is co-sponsored by UNIDO.
- (vi) Expert Group Meeting on Identification of Projects for Regional Co-operation in the Capital Goods and Heavy Engineering Industries 15-19 June 1981, Vienna, Austria (ibid., para. 30). This meeting is co-sponsored by UNIDO.
- (vii) Project Review Meeting of Food Security in Yemen and Democratic Yemen, June 1981 Sana'a, Yemen (ibid., para. 5). This meeting is to be organized by the governments concerned. ECWA will provide substantive support.
- (viii) Expert Group Meeting on Regional Co-operation in Industry, 7-11 September 1981.

- (ix) Expert Group Meeting on Feasible Forms of Economic Co-operation and Integration in Western Asia, November 1981 (ibid., para. 38).
- (x) Intergovernmental Planners' Meeting on Industrial Planning and Implementation 7-11 December 1981.

The secretariat is confident that member States will participate actively in these meetings.

Identifecation of activities that are obsolete,
of marginal usefulness or ineffective

5. In response to Economic and Social Council decision 1980/179, the ECWA secretariat identified a number of activities - programmed in its 1980-1981 programme of work and priorities - that are obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective (E/ECWA/120/Add.1). The identification process - which was carried out according to the tentative criteria established by the Secretary-General and accepted by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CFC) - should be seen against the efforts of both member States and the secretariat to utilize resources effeciently and to redeploy resources to finance new United Nations activities. Primarily, it concerns activities which organizations are called upon to carry out in response to resolutions adopted by the Commission.

6. In the case of ECWA, the activities identified affect 4 programme elements and 11 outputs which were to be implemented with a total of 140 Professional work-months. These resources have been redeployed either to other programme elements within the same programme or to other activities within the same elements. Document E/ECWA/120/Add.1 provides details in this regard. The ECWA proposals were included in the Secretary-General's report to the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly. In its resolution 35/209, the General Assembly decided to terminate forthwith the activities identified by the Secretary-General. Hence, the activities by the ECWA secretariat as indicated in document E/ECWA/120/Add.1 for all practical purposes no longer form part of the Commission's programme of work and priorities, 1980-1981. In its report on progress made in the implementation of the work programme (E/ECWA/120), brief reference has been made to this under the pertinent programme elements.

7. In his report, the Secretary-General expressed the opinion that it would be essential for intergovernmental bodies to be involved in the identification of activities which should be discontinued. This has not been possible with respect to the exercise undertaken for the 1980-1981 work programme. In future planning exercises, the secretariat will propose to the Commission the activities to be discontinued. Under item 8 of the provisional agenda, the Commission may wish to take this matter up in so far as it concerns the 1982-1983 programme of work and priorities.

Technical co-operation activities

8. The Commission's technical co-operation activities are expanding slowly. The projects entitled "Household Survey Services" and "International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade" (E/ECWA/120/Add.2, paras. 31-36) have become operational. The secretariat's proposed "Regional Training Programme for the Development of Technological Capabilities" has been positively considered by the United Nations Interim Fund for Science and Technology for Development (*ibid.*, para. 39). It will shortly be transmitted to member States for their endorsement. The secretariat wishes to underline the importance of member States' active participation in these regional projects.

9. Although the technical co-operation activities of the Commission are expanding, the secretariat is of the opinion that insufficient opportunities exist for the financing of regional technical co-operation projects by the various funding agencies of the United Nations. In document E/ECWA/117/Add.2, the secretariat has described briefly the projects it has formulated but for which no source of financing has been identified. The Commission may wish to consider the need for raising funds for technical co-operation projects in conjunction with item 9 (b) of the provisional agenda on the strengthening of the Financial Contributions Account.