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

Statistical Committee  
Tenth session  
Cairo, 30-31 January 2013

Item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda

**PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE FIELD OF STATISTICS  
SINCE THE NINTH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY  
THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE AT ITS NINTH SESSION**

**Summary**

The present report summarizes progress in implementing recommendations that the Statistical Committee addressed, at its ninth session, to member countries and to ESCWA.

The Committee is invited to take note of what has been accomplished in implementation of the recommendations of its ninth session. Member country representatives are also invited to comment and make recommendations on the status of implementation.

## CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
<b>I. OVERVIEW .....</b>	1-5	3
<b>II. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE AT ITS NINTH SESSION .....</b>		3
A. Recommendations addressed to member countries .....		3
B. Recommendations addressed to ESCWA secretariat .....		4
<b>III. ACTION REQUIRED BY THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE .....</b>	6	6

## I. OVERVIEW

1. The Statistical Committee, at its ninth session (Beirut, 13-15 October 2010), addressed three recommendations to ESCWA member countries and 11 recommendations to ESCWA secretariat. This report presents each of those recommendations followed by the action taken to implement it.
2. Two of the recommendations addressed to member countries are long-term, and their implementation is ongoing and on track. One of them relates to the 2011 round of the International Comparison Program (ICP) that is expected to be completed in 2014, and the other relates to the requests of member countries for technical assistance. The third recommendation relating to the exhibition of ESCWA member countries at the forty-second session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in February 2011 was implemented successfully with the active participation of all national statistical offices. The purpose of the exhibition was to complement the programme of the Statistical Commission that considered the development of official statistics in the ESCWA region at its session.
3. The majority of the 11 recommendations addressed to the secretariat were implemented. The implementation of some recommendations is progressing as planned, and other recommendations relate to long-term, ongoing processes.
4. The implementation of the recommendation related to the Task Force on the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses was delayed due to lack of financial resources. In the framework of a project financed by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), ESCWA organized several activities related to censuses. A proposal for creating the working group on population and housing censuses is submitted to the current session in document E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/7, chapter III.
5. The recommendation to propose holding the sessions of the Statistical Committee annually instead of biennially in order to discuss important statistical developments in a quickly changing world, and to align the timing of the ESCWA Statistical Committee meetings with that of the United Nations Statistical Commission meetings was not approved by the Technical Committee, along with similar recommendations from two other intergovernmental committees of ESCWA for resource constraints.

## II. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE AT ITS NINTH SESSION

### A. RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO MEMBER COUNTRIES

#### **Recommendation**

- (a) To form a task force comprised of Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Palestine, in charge of the following tasks:
  - (i) To review the draft report prepared by ESCWA on regional statistical development in Western Asia in the light of the proposals of member countries. The report will be presented to the forty-second session of the United Nations Statistical Commission to be held in New York from 22 to 25 February 2011;
  - (ii) To determine a mechanism of work for the exhibition that will be organized on the sidelines of the forty-second session of the Statistical Commission.

#### **Action taken:** Implemented

The majority of ESCWA member countries participated in the exhibition at the forty-second session of the Statistical Commission. The exhibition had a positive impact on session participants who noted the statistical work of ESCWA member countries.

National statistical offices of ESCWA member countries showed their commitment to official statistics through this exhibition and through their involvement in the session itself including Oman, which chaired the session and other member countries which made interventions on substantive issues.

### **Recommendation**

(b) To urge the Executive Board of ICP to address all issues related to launching the 2011 programme phase. The Board particularly advocated addressing aspects related to the current funding deficit, and clarification of the roles of all partners and tasks to be implemented. Member countries were also asked to secure necessary funding to cover the national expenses of the project.

**Action taken:** In progress – on track.

The 2011 ICP round in Western Asia is progressing according to the global timetable; deadlines set by the World Bank for the submission of price data were timely met by ESCWA in its role as the Regional Coordinating Office.

Details relating to the progress of the 2011 ICP round are available in document E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/CRP.2, chapter I, paragraphs 8-15.

### **Recommendation**

(c) To request the secretariat to provide technical advice and statistical capacity-building.

**Action taken:** In progress – on track.

Member countries continue to address requests for technical assistance to ESCWA.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO ESCWA SECRETARIAT**

### **Recommendation**

(a) To undertake the liaison role and assume coordination functions between statistical offices in the region and the Statistical Commission, in preparation for participation of member countries in the exhibition that will be organized on the sidelines of the forty-second session of the Statistical Commission.

**Action taken:** Implemented.

The exhibition of ESCWA member countries was successful with a large number of exhibits by national statistical offices. ESCWA member countries increased their visibility at the forty-second session of the Statistical Commission.

### **Recommendation**

(b) To submit to member countries for ratification a study that would be prepared by the Statistical Committee of ESCWA based on observations of member countries on the guidelines of the strategic vision of the statistical work of ESCWA.

**Action taken:** Implemented.

A draft document was circulated to national statistical offices in 2010 and was presented at the forty-second session of the Statistical Commission.

### **Recommendation**

(c) To execute the implementation strategy of the System of National Accounts (SNA) 2008, taking into consideration the specificities of each country.

**Action taken:** In progress – on track.

Information on progress in implementation of SNA is available in document E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/CRP.2, chapter II.

### **Recommendation**

(d) To examine and reconsider the functions of the Task Force on the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses. To consider as well the issue of funding future meetings, provided such considerations are presented to the Commission meeting which will be held in February 2011 for proper deliberation.

**Action taken:** In progress – delayed.

A proposal to create the working group on population and housing censuses is submitted to the Committee in document E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/7, chapter III. The delay is related to the availability of resources.

ESCWA obtained financing for activities from UNFPA. Several activities related to population and housing censuses were organized under the framework of that financing. For more details see E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/CRP.2, chapter VI.

### **Recommendation**

(e) To use data issued by statistical agencies and refrain from relying on other sources in ESCWA statistical bulletins.

**Action taken:** In progress – on track.

ESCWA increased the proportion of data provided by national statistical offices in its statistical bulletins. When other data are used for data comparison purposes, such as in the case of MDG indicators, ESCWA makes efforts to reconcile data variations.

### **Recommendation**

(f) To coordinate directly with statistical agencies on topics related to ESCWA statistical work in member countries.

**Action taken:** In progress – on track.

The Statistics Division of ESCWA consults with national statistical offices on all issues related to official statistics in their respective countries.

### **Recommendation**

(g) To coordinate on the possibility of transmitting reports to member countries for revision before they are printed and published by ESCWA.

**Action taken:** In progress – partly implemented.

A progressively increasing number of reports are being submitted to member countries prior to publishing.

### **Recommendation**

(h) To approve the draft programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 in the field of statistics taking into consideration any amendments in the light of propositions of member countries.

**Action taken:** Implemented.

The biennial programme of work was approved by the General Assembly.

### **Recommendation**

(i) To address a recommendation to the twenty-seventh session of ESCWA for holding the sessions of the Statistical Committee annually instead of biennially.

**Action taken:** Not implemented – an alternate/interim solution in place.

ESCWA addressed the recommendation to the Technical Committee at its sixth meeting (Beirut, 1-2 December 2011). However, the recommendation was not approved.

To supplement the biennial sessions of the Committee, ESCWA organized annual meetings of the Working Group of the Statistical Committee.

### **Recommendation**

(j) To invite the representative of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) secretariat to attend ESCWA statistics-related meetings.

**Action taken:** In progress – on track.

The secretariat of GCC was invited to the Regional Task Force on Statistical Coordination, as well as to the tenth session of the Statistical Committee.

### **Recommendation**

(k) To examine, technically revise and evaluate the United Arab Emirates report in the field of official statistics and competitiveness indicators, in terms of its preparation mechanism and the reliability of its indicators.

**Action taken:** Implemented.

A conference room paper was made available to participants at the forty-second session of the Statistical Commission.

## **III. ACTION REQUIRED BY THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE**

6. The Committee is invited:

(a) To take note of the status of implementation of recommendations made at its ninth session;

(b) To consider its position on the periodicity of its session, taking into account that it was not approved by the Technical Committee because of resource constraints;

(c) To request the secretariat to report on the implementation of long-term recommendations at the eleventh session of the Committee.

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