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**PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE FIELD OF STATISTICS
SINCE THE NINTH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE****STATISTICS-RELATED ACTIVITIES UNDER THE PROGRAMME OF WORK****Summary**

The present report summarizes activities and their results according to the main subject-matter domains of statistics, namely: statistical policy and coordination; demographic and social statistics; and economic statistics. This format was chosen in order to enable members of the Statistical Committee to identify gaps and shortcomings, and areas for future improvement. Activities that took place over the past two years have been organized irrespective of the sources of funding or other administrative characteristics.

In addition and following up the request made by participants in the fifth meeting of the Working Group of the Statistical Committee (Beirut, 14-15 February 2012), ESCWA prepared a report on projects in progress which is available to the committee in document E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/CRP.2.

Members of the Committee are invited to express their views on the progress achieved since the ninth session of the Statistical Committee and to formulate lessons learned to guide the future work of the Committee and that of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

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Introduction

1. The role of subprogramme 5, Statistics for evidence-based policymaking, of the programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011 is to provide a platform for the development of official statistics in the Western Asia region. The work programme is guided by the discussions of the Statistical Committee during its biennial sessions, before being submitted to the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs for consideration. Operative adjustments are made to the biennial plans as needed, and the workplan is complemented by activities covered by other sources of financing than the regular budget of the United Nations.
2. The work of ESCWA in 2010-2011 focused on four regional priority areas, namely managing water and energy, social policies, managing globalization and managing technology; and on three cross-cutting issues, namely, statistical capacity-building, the advancement of women and assistance to countries emerging from conflict.
3. In relation to the cross-cutting issues of statistics, ESCWA identified overall improvement and significant progress at the national level in data compilation and dissemination to monitor Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators. With support from ESCWA, six new and/or revised statistical standards or recommendations were implemented by at least seven ESCWA member countries. In addition, the System of Environmental and Economic Accounting for Water (SEEAW) has been implemented in Jordan, Egypt and Palestine. Taking into account the resource requirements and complexity of SEEAW, this should be considered an extraordinary achievement. Regarding compliance with data dissemination standards the results show important progress, exceeding expectations. With support from ESCWA, 13 of 14 ESCWA member countries are now compliant with the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) or Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).¹
4. The present report summarizes the results ESCWA achieved and its activities and outputs organized according to the main subject-matter domains of statistics, irrespective of their source of funding or administrative status. This style of presentation was chosen in order to enable members of the Committee to identify gaps, shortcoming and areas for future improvement. Following up the request made by participants in the fifth meeting of the Working Group of the Statistical Committee (Beirut, 14-15 February 2012), ESCWA prepared a report on its projects currently in progress which has been made available to the Committee in document E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/CRP.2.
5. The Statistics Division is responsible for implementing subprogramme 5, and aims to improve the production and use of harmonized and comparable economic, social and sectoral statistics, including sex-disaggregated data, thereby allowing for informed and evidence-based decision-making.
6. The results achieved under each of the two expected accomplishments of this subprogramme in the biennium 2010-2011 are set out below.

Expected accomplishment 1: Progress in improving the national institutional framework for official statistics, particularly in conflict-affected countries and those that are less statistically developed

7. With respect to the implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the results show progress overall but there are still gaps with respect to the following Principles: 1, concerning relevance, impartiality and equal access; 6, concerning confidentiality; 9, concerning international standards; and 10, concerning bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics. With respect to compliance with the

¹ ESCWA, *Programme performance report for the biennium 2010-2011* (E/ESCWA/27/5(Part I)). Note that the evaluation is based on the membership of ESCWA during the reporting period. Recently, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia became members of ESCWA and the current membership consists of 17 countries.

data dissemination standards of IMF, the results show important progress, which exceeds expectations. Thirteen out of 14 member countries are compliant with GDDS or SDDS standards of IMF.

Lessons learned

8. The future focus should be on implementing the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, particularly Principles 1, 6, 9 and 10. Implementing these Principles is not only in hands of statisticians, and it is important to involve policymakers and legislators.

Expected accomplishment 2: Enhanced capacity of national statistical offices to produce and disseminate relevant, timely, reliable and comparable social, economic and environment statistics and indicators, including Millennium Development Goal indicators and gender-disaggregated data, in compliance with international standards and recommendations

9. There is an overall improvement in the average availability of MDG indicators in the countries of the region of about 17 per cent since 2008, thereby indicating significant progress at the national level in data compilation and dissemination to monitor MDGs. Six new and/or revised standards or recommendations were implemented by at least seven ESCWA member countries: the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA); the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (ISIC Rev. 2); the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED); the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO); the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services (MSITS Rev. 3) or the Harmonized System (HS) according to individual country preferences; recommendations for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses; and SEEAW.

Lessons learned

10. More attention should be given to the quality, rather than the simple availability of MDG indicators. Countries signaled numerous discrepancies between national and international data. Arabic translations are not widely available, which harms the implementation of and compliance with new international standards.

I. STATISTICAL POLICY AND COORDINATION

A. OVERVIEW

11. The heads of national statistical offices are invited to attend the biennial sessions of the Statistical Committee. Because the biennial cycle is too infrequent, ESCWA facilitates annual meetings of the Working Group of the Statistical Committee at the request of member countries.

12. In addition to these meetings, ESCWA organized events and published methodological material of a cross-cutting nature, to support and monitor progress towards the goals defined in the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations and improve the quality of data and metadata. The activities of ESCWA included capacity-building and advisory services and the collection and dissemination of gender statistics.

B. MEETINGS, EXPERT GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

13. ESCWA organized two meetings for the Working Group of the Statistical Committee: the fourth meeting in Beirut, on 3 and 4 February, 2011; and the fifth meeting in Beirut, on 14 and 15 February, 2012.

14. In the areas of measuring progress of development indicators including MDGs and gender, ESCWA organized the following workshops and meetings:

- First Coordinators' Workshop on Measuring the Well-being and Progress of Arab Societies, Beirut, 1-5 November 2010;

- Arab time use statistics workshop, Amman, 25-28 April 2011;
- Workshop on the use of statistical data and metadata exchange (SDMX) and DevInfo for MDG data reporting, Amman, 10-14 July 2011;
- Expert group meeting on data and metadata reporting, Amman, 16-18 July 2011;
- Workshop on modern ways of confronting violence against women, Beirut, 31 October 2011;
- Consultative meeting on guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women, Beirut, 8-10 November 2011;
- Third meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics in the Arab Region; and second meeting of the Task Force on Gender Statistics in the Arab Region, Beirut, 14-16 November 2011;
- Regional workshop on using DevInfo for gender analysis, Beirut, 5-9 March 2012;
- Fourth Global Forum on Gender Statistics, Dead Sea, Jordan, 27-29 March 2012;
- Regional workshop on linking population censuses with agricultural censuses, Amman, 24-28 June 2012;
- Workshop on MDG data reconciliation: Employment indicators, Beirut, 12-13 July 2012.

C. PUBLICATIONS

15. The following publications of a cross-cutting nature were published by ESCWA:

- Statistical Abstract of the ESCWA region, Issue No. 30;
- Statistical Abstract of the ESCWA region, Issue No. 31;
- ESCWA Country Profiles, 2011: A Statistical Portrait of the Western Asia;
- Charting the Progress of the Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region: A Statistical Portrait, 2009;
- Gender in Figures, e-publication available from: <http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/scu/genderinfigures/index.asp>.

D. TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICES

16. ESCWA contributed in substance to several events organized by member countries or other regional and international organizations:

- Second expert group meeting on measuring violence against women, Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva, 18-19 November 2010;
- First meeting of the Task Team on Mainstreaming Disability in MDG Monitoring (29 November 2010); and the eighteenth meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goal Indicators, Geneva, 30 November-2 December 2010;
- First conference of Al Khawarezmi Committee, Doha, 6-8 December 2010. A representative of ESCWA participated as a resource person in the session on gender statistics as a tool for mainstreaming gender issues in national development;
- Provided training on gender and MDG indicators upon the request of the Statistics and Information Technology Authority in Saudi Arabia, 6-9 February 2011;
- Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) regional workshop on the human development approach and measurement, Doha, 9 May 2011;

- Latin American Conference on Measuring Well-Being and Fostering the Progress of Societies, Mexico City, 11-13 May 2011;
- Expert group meeting on the Global Gender and Economic Policy Management Initiative in the Arab Countries, Manama, 12-14 March 2012;
- Interregional MDG indicators meeting: Sharing knowledge to improve MDG monitoring and reporting, Santiago, 5-17 May 2012.

E. TECHNICAL MATERIAL

17. The following technical materials were developed under the auspices of ESCWA:

- Glossary on Gender Statistical Terms: e-glossary of terms in Arabic and English, available from: <http://www.escwa.un.org/gsp/glossary/main.html>;
- Glossary of common terms used for the collection, production and dissemination of statistics, available from: <http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/main.asp?division=sd>;
- Arab MDGInfo 2010, a database for 22 Arab countries that includes time series on MDG indicators for each country;
- Arab MDG Atlas 2010, wall chart depicting progress by indicator on the map of the Arab region.

II. DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL STATISTICS

A. OVERVIEW

18. The work under subprogramme 5 has continued to enhance the capacity of national statistical offices in demographic and social statistics, focusing on methodological developments in population statistics, particularly censuses and labour statistics.

19. In connection with the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses, ESCWA organized several activities to support census methodologies and the analysis of census results. Population and housing censuses have taken place or will soon take place in 14 member countries. Other activities were conducted to improve the collection, dissemination and analysis of labour statistics.

20. In addition, a group of activities focused on sex-disaggregated statistics tailored to the region or to specific member countries.

B. MEETINGS, EXPERT GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

21. The following meetings and workshops took place in the area of demographic and social statistics, including gender statistics with the active involvement of ESCWA:

- Expert group meeting on measurement issues in labour statistics, Beirut, 29-30 June 2011;
- Expert group meeting on a comparative analysis of gender equality gaps in 12 Arab countries, Amman, 3 November 2011;
- Workshop on population census preparedness in some Arab countries, Amman, 18-19 December 2011;
- Training workshop on the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) in population censuses, Amman, 20-21 December 2011;

- Preparatory regional meeting for the nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in partnership with ESCWA, Beirut, 18-20 June 2012;
- Workshop on population census preparedness in some Arab Countries, Tunis, 3-5 July 2012;
- Meeting on analysis of gender equality gaps among youth in Arab countries, Amman, 4-5 November 2012;
- Workshop on conducting and analysing labour-force surveys for monitoring the labour market, Amman, 18-22 November 2012, in cooperation with the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS) and ILO.

C. PUBLICATIONS

22. Publications in the area of demographic and social statistics include print and web-based methodological materials and compilations of data issued since the ninth session of the Statistical Committee. The following documents are available on the ESCWA Statistics e-publications portal <http://data.escwa-stat.org>:

- Compendium of Social Statistics and Indicators: Arab Society, Issue No. 10;
- Bulletin on Population and Vital Statistics in the ESCWA Region, Issue No. 13;
- Bulletin on Population and Vital Statistics in the ESCWA Region, Issue No. 14.

D. FIELD PROJECTS

23. ESCWA currently implements the following field projects:

- Strengthening national capacity in social statistics and preparedness for the International Conference on Population and Development. Extrabudgetary sponsorship provided by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA);
- Analysis of gender equality gaps in the Arab region. Extrabudgetary funding provided by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women);
- Strengthening capacity of national policy analysts in the social and economic sectors of developing countries in the production and use of National Transfer Accounts (NTA). This Development Account (DA) project will run from 2011 to 2013, in cooperation with other regional commissions and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). Two ESCWA member countries are participating in the project;
- Data Improvement and Quality in Access (DIQA) initiative for the Middle East and North Africa with the World Bank and ILO. The project is in the fundraising stage;
- Improving population and vital statistics in the region, in cooperation with UNFPA and the World Health Organization/Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, (WHO/EMRO), subject to concluding a memorandum of understanding;
- Capacity-building activities in the area of labour statistics in cooperation with ILO.

E. TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICES

24. ESCWA provided the following technical advisory services in the area of demographic and social statistics, including substantive contributions to events organized by member countries and other regional and international organizations:

- Reviewed and evaluated changes in the current poverty line in Palestine, including evaluating the quality of data being used, supporting the team and providing guidelines for a plan of action, 6-13 January 2011;
- Attended the second meeting of the advisory committee for the Forced Migration and Refugees Unit of Birzeit University, Ramallah, Palestine, 8 January 2011;
- Participated, as a Council member, in the meeting of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), 7-11 February 2011, to discuss the twenty-seventh IUSSP International Population Conference to take place in Busan, Republic of Korea in 2013;
- Participated as a resource person and trainer in the workshop on Harmonizing Social Indicators in the Mediterranean Countries, organized by MEDSTAT, Paris, 1-4 March 2011;
- High-level professional meeting discussing the feasibility of establishing a postgraduate programme in demography in Iraq, Amman, 13-14 March 2011;
- Expert group meeting on methodologies of census data analysis, Qatar, 30-31 March 2011. Presented a paper on methods and techniques of measuring mortality (infant, child and adult);
- Provided technical advice to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in population and housing census, Gaza, July 2011 and April 2012;
- Participated as a resource person/trainer at the Pan-Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM) data utilization workshop, Cairo, 25-28 July 2011;
- Provided technical assistance to develop monitoring and evaluation indicators for the culture strategy of the Ministry of Culture, Ramallah, Palestine, 12-15 September 2011;
- Meeting of stakeholders and donors of the Programme of Regionally Coordinated Households International Migration Surveys in the Mediterranean Countries (MED-HIMS), Cairo, 20 September 2011;
- Delivered a presentation on conflict and infant mortality in Palestine at the human security seminar series, Middle East Studies, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, United States, 11 October 2011;
- Conference on Palestinian Refugees: Different Generations but One Identity, Ramallah, Palestine, 21-22 November 2011, and the advisory committee meeting of the Forced Migration and Refugees Unit of Birzeit University;
- Expert group meeting on the DA project on NTA in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 6-7 December 2011, participation in the discussion of the draft manual; meeting of NTA global research network, 8-9 December 2011;
- Conference on the demographic transition in the Middle East and North Africa, Amman, 14-16 January 2012, delivered a presentation on consanguinity and fertility transition in the Palestinian Territory;
- Participated in a workshop on MED-HIMS in Amman, March 2012;
- Participated, as a Council member, in the meeting of IUSSP, Paris, 8-9 March 2012;
- Participated in a workshop on user-producer statistics with the Central Administration of Statistics, Beirut, April 2012;
- Advisory mission to evaluate the 2007 population census at the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in Ramallah, 8-12 April 2012;
- Technical advice to the workshop on developing indicators to measure cultural participation, Ministry of Culture, Ramallah, Palestine, 23 April 2012;

- Technical support to the Sudan and exchange of expertise in the field of poverty analysis using household survey data, 13-14 June 2012;
- Consultative meeting on the information systems and the global burden of disease, 2010 study for the Eastern Mediterranean by WHO/EMRO, Amman, 17-18 July 2012;
- Participated as a resource person in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) training workshop for the DA project on NTA, Amman, 22-24 July 2012;
- Expert group meeting on user-producer statistics, jointly with MEDSTAT;
- Advisory mission to assess technical needs of the Central Statistical Organisation of Yemen, Sanaa, 20-22 October 2012.

III. ECONOMIC STATISTICS AND NATIONAL ACCOUNTS, INCLUDING ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS

A. OVERVIEW

25. Through concerted efforts with the statistical offices of member countries, ESCWA has continued to enhance the capacity and ensure the development of the work on priority areas of economic statistics: the implementation of SNA (1993 and 2008); short-term economic statistics; International Comparison Program (ICP) and price statistics; external trade in goods and services and industrial statistics; energy and environment statistics and accounts; and information and communication technology (ICT) indicators.

B. MEETINGS, EXPERT GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

26. ESCWA organized the following training activities, workshops and meetings:

- Regional workshop on SITS, Muscat, 11-13 January 2011, in cooperation with the World Bank Institute, the World Trade Organization, the League of Arab States and the Ministry of National Economy of Oman;
- Third ICP regional workshop, Beirut, 26-28 January 2011;
- ICP training workshop for Kuwait and Iraq, Kuwait, 5-7 April 2011;
- Regional workshop on constructing input-output tables, Kuwait, 8-12 May 2011 in cooperation with AITRS;
- Expert group meeting on national accounts, Amman, 12-14 July 2011;
- Fourth ICP regional workshop, Beirut, 17-21 October 2011;
- Regional workshop on industrial statistics for the Arab countries, Beirut, 15-16 November 2011, in cooperation with League of Arab States, UNSD and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO);
- Mission to Egypt to extract ICP household consumption data for Egypt and the Sudan, 31 January-7 February 2012;
- ICP regional executive board meeting, New York, 27 February 2012;
- Mission to Kuwait to extract ICP household consumption data and provide training on ICP special surveys, 5-8 March 2012;
- Fifth ICP regional workshop, Dead Sea, Jordan, 12-15 March 2012;
- Workshop on water accounts and statistics for Mediterranean countries, Beirut, 20-22 March 2012 in cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA) and UNSD;

- Expert group meeting on energy statistics and balance, Beirut, 18-20 April 2012;
- National workshop on the Survey of ICT Use in the Business Sector in Iraq, Beirut, 24-26 April 2012;
- Subregional workshop on industrial statistics for GCC countries, Doha, 8-10 May 2012, in cooperation with Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting, UNSD and UNIDO;
- Mission to Qatar for training on ICP activities, Doha, 14-16 May 2012;
- Mission to Bahrain for training on ICP activities, Manama, 20-21 May 2012;
- Regional workshop on statistics of international trade in services, Amman, 12-14 June 2012, in cooperation with UNSD and AITRS;
- Workshop on national accounts activities related to ICP, Amman, 17-18 July 2012;
- Coordination meeting between ESCWA, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), League of Arab States and Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), 1 November 2012.

C. PUBLICATIONS

27. The following publications dealing with economic statistics and national accounts have been issued since the ninth session of the Statistical Committee and disseminated on ESCWA-Statistics e-publications portal available from <http://data.escwa-stat.org>:

- National Accounts Studies of the ESCWA Region, Bulletin No. 30;
- National Accounts Studies of the ESCWA Region, Bulletin No. 31;
- Study on Economic Statistics in the ESCWA Region: Sources and Methods, 2011;
- Bulletin of Industrial Statistics for the Arab Countries (with the-Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization), Issue No. 7;
- External Trade Bulletin of the ESCWA Region, Issue No. 19;
- External Trade Bulletin of the ESCWA Region, Issue No. 20;
- ICP monthly newsletter, published since October 2011;
- Compendium of Environment Statistics in the ESCWA Region, 2010-2011;
- Sustainable Development Indicators for the Arab Region, Guiding Principles and Methodologies, 2011: Part 1 - Social Development Indicators; Part 2 - Environment Indicators; Part 3 - Economic Development Indicators, jointly published with the League of Arab States, UNEP and CEDARE.

D. TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICES

28. Under subprogramme 5, advisory services are provided to member countries upon request, in the following areas: national accounts; price statistics; energy and energy balance statistics; environment and sustainable development indicators; and ICT surveys. Following a high demand for technical advisory services, ESCWA recruited a regional advisor on economic statistics and national accounting. His advisory services are undertaken in conjunction with capacity-development work under the regular work programme and projects of ESCWA (such as ICP), and on the basis of requests formulated by member countries.

29. The following advisory services and technical cooperation activities and missions were organized by ESCWA:

(a) *National accounts and economic statistics*

- Kuwait, Central Statistical Office, 4-9 December 2010, to assess the source and methods used to compile the national accounts based on 1993 SNA and provide the authorities with recommendations to improve national accounts and shift to the new 2008 SNA;
- Jordan, Department of Statistics, 19-30 December 2010, to assist in developing a new system of compiling quarterly national accounts;
- Syrian Arab Republic, Central Bureau of Statistics and the Planning and International Cooperation Commission, 9-20 January 2011, to assist in revising gross domestic product (GDP) estimates at constant prices and compiling external trade price and volume indices;
- Syrian Arab Republic, Central Bureau of Statistics, 3-7 April 2011, to conduct a training course for the construction of supply and use tables for the year 2009 as a prerequisite to build a national social accounting matrix which will be used for planning purposes;
- United Arab Emirates, Dubai Statistics Center, 24 April-5 May 2011, to provide training on price statistics, basics of national accounts, identification of proper methodologies, and questionnaires and sampling techniques for conducting economic surveys;
- Iraq, Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology, 5-7 July 2011, on the methodologies, sampling, classification system, designing questionnaires and identifying the appropriate procedures for conducting internal trade surveys;
- Jordan, Department of Statistics, 4-25 September 2011, to assist staff on methods and sources used for compiling quarterly national accounts and training the staff on the Bench program which is used in compiling quarterly GDP estimates consistent with annual estimates;
- Syrian Arab Republic, Central Bureau of Statistics, 30 January-3 February 2012, to assist in balancing the supply and use table that was constructed by the national account team;
- Syrian Arab Republic, Central Bureau of Statistics, 27 February-2 March 2012, to assist in compiling the supplementary matrices to the supply and use table needed for compiling the input-output tables for the year 2009;
- Jordan, Department of Statistics, 2-25 March 2012, on rebasing the national accounts to 2006;
- Kuwait, Central Statistical Office, 7-19 April 2012, to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the methods and sources used for developing the new series of national accounts at constant prices and to develop a strategic plan for the transition to 2008 SNA;
- Qatar, Statistics Authority, 12-15 May 2012, to assist in developing real price indices and develop an initial draft of the strategy for implementing 2008 SNA;
- Oman, Ministry of National Economy, 19-30 May 2012, to conduct national workshops on national accounts;
- United Arab Emirates, National Statistics Centre, 3-7 June 2012, on compilation of supply and use tables;
- Jordan, Department of Statistics, 18 June-13 July 2012, to assess and adjust data sources and methodologies used for compiling national accounts rebased to 2006.

(b) *Price statistics, including ICP*

- United Arab Emirates, Dubai Statistical Center, 6-10 March 2011, to assist in choosing the proper methodologies and identifying the required data sources needed for compiling real-estate price indices;
- United Arab Emirates, Dubai Statistical Center, 24 April-5 May 2011, to follow up progress in the compilation of real-estate price indices and assist the Center in the compilation of the Producer Price Index (PPI);
- Egypt, Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics, 31 January-2 February 2012, to extract household consumption data from the Semper format,² to allow for the active participation of Egypt in ICP Western Asia;
- The Sudan, Central Bureau of Statistics, Cairo, 5-7 February 2012, to extract household consumption data from the Semper format, to allow for the active participation of the Sudan in ICP Western Asia;
- Kuwait, Central Statistical Office, 5-8 March 2012, for training on the validation of household consumption data and guidance on the implementation of ICP special surveys;
- Qatar, Statistics Authority, 14-16 May 2012, for training the ICP national team on ICP activities, data validation, national accounts requirements and implementation of price surveys;
- Bahrain, Central Statistics Organization, 20-21 May 2012, for training on ICP activities, data validation and the implementation of special surveys.

(c) *Energy and environment statistics*

- Egypt, Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics, 27 February-1 March, 2012, to prepare a needs assessment report on energy balance, improve energy data in the energy balance tables with data from numerous surveys and administrative data from the Ministry of Petroleum. Carried out in connection with the DA project on energy statistics;
- Qatar, Statistics Authority, 4-5 March 2012, to provide technical assistance on energy statistics and balance in the context of the DA project on energy statistics. A needs assessment report prepared by an international consultant and reviewed by ESCWA was submitted to the Statistics Authority;
- Kuwait, Environment Public Authority, 5-8 March 2012, to provide expertise and input to the workshop between the Authority and Central Administration of Statistics on the Environmental Performance Index and environment indicators;
- United Arab Emirates, National Bureau of Statistics, 19-21 June 2012, to provide technical assistance on energy statistics and balance in the context of the DA project on energy statistics. A needs assessment report prepared by international consultant and reviewed by ESCWA was submitted to the National Bureau of Statistics.

(d) *ICT statistics*

United Arab Emirates, National Bureau of Statistics, 27-31 March 2011, to assist on compilation of ICT indicators, organized by the Information and Communication Technology Division and Statistics Division.

² Semper format is typical of Semper software, developed by the African Development Bank for use in Africa. Western Asia, like other regions of ICP, uses Qaranta format developed in OECD-Eurostat comparisons and implemented by the World Bank in its software.

E. STUDY VISITS AND FELLOWSHIPS

30. The participation of Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman in the MEDSTAT meeting on energy balance in Paris in November 2011 was sponsored by ESCWA. ESCWA also sponsored the following: a study visit to the International Energy Agency in March 2012 for Iraqi officials working in statistics in ministries of energy and electricity; study visits for representatives of Iraq and Yemen to participate in the training course on developing and using questionnaires for agricultural statistics in Istanbul from 18 to 21 July 2011 which was organized by MEDSTAT; and participation by a Palestinian representative in the meeting of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on agriculture statistics in Jordan.

IV. ACTION REQUIRED OF THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

31. The Committee is invited:

(a) To take note of and express its views on the progress in implementing statistics-related activities under the work programme of ESCWA;

(b) To make recommendations, on the basis of lessons learned, on future priority areas in the statistical work of ESCWA and priorities for cooperation between the national statistical offices in member countries;

(c) To make recommendations for the continuation of ongoing statistics-oriented projects executed by ESCWA, notably the following projects (for more detail see E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/CRP.2):

- 2011 ICP round;
- Project on implementation of 2008 SNA;
- DA project on energy statistics and energy balance;
- DA project on achieving gender equality and women's empowerment;
- DA project on monitoring MDGs;
- Strengthening national capacities in social statistics and preparedness for the upcoming International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014;
- Analysis of gender equality gaps in the Arab region;
- DA project on NTA;
- Labour statistics and cooperation with relevant organizations.
