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**IMPLEMENTATION OF STATISTICS-RELATED RESOLUTIONS
OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION OF ESCWA**

Summary

This report presents the actions taken by the secretariat to implement the statistics-related resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) at its twenty-sixth session. The commission adopted one resolution directly related to statistics, and another resolution that has a statistics-related component.

The Statistical Committee is invited to take note of the progress achieved in the implementation of those resolutions and express its views on the future work in that regard.

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	1	3
<i>Chapter</i>		
I. RESOLUTION 297 (XXVI): ARAB MDG MONITOR FOR SOCIETAL PROGRESS	1-11	3
A. The resolution.....	1	3
B. Implementation procedures	2-11	3
II. RESOLUTION 295 (XXVI): GUIDING DECLARATION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA ON GIVING GREATER ATTENTION TO YOUTH POLICIES: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DEVELOPMENT	12-16	4
A. The resolution.....	12	4
B. Implementation procedures	13-16	5
III. ACTION REQUIRED OF THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE	17	5

Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) adopted, at its twenty-sixth session (Beirut, 17-20 May 2010) two resolutions relating to statistics: resolution 297(XXVI) entitled “Arab MDG monitor for societal progress” is directly related to statistics, and resolution 295(XXVI) entitled “Guiding declaration of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on giving greater attention to youth policies: an opportunity for development” has a statistics-related component. The present document reviews the progress achieved by the secretariat in implementing those resolutions.

I. RESOLUTION 297 (XXVI) ARAB MDG MONITOR FOR SOCIETAL PROGRESS

A. THE RESOLUTION

2. In this resolution, the Commission requested the secretariat to develop a Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) monitor for societal progress towards achieving MDGs, including those related to gender equality and youth. In addition, the resolution requested the Executive Secretary to submit a report at the twenty-seventh session of ESCWA on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution and on the achievements of ESCWA in improving gender and youth statistics at the regional level.

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

1. *Development data and indicators*

(a) *Developing a strategy for availability of all indicators*

3. Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) has been recognized nationally and internationally as an important tool for the exchange of development indicators, including MDGs and their metadata. In 2011, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and ESCWA organized capacity-building training on the use of SDMX. Training for national statistical offices and line ministries has been planned, and an international workshop will also be organized in order to share experience on the use of SDMX and to support networking.

(b) *Identifying ways for monitoring and reporting*

4. ESCWA promotes the use of DevInfo in Arab countries and conducts training exercises to build their capacity to disseminate MDGs and other developmental indicators and to facilitate monitoring and reporting. It is planning to hold its tenth training on DevInfo by end of 2012. The latest version of DevInfo (ver. 7.0) will be a web-based open source application, and includes a tool for SDMX and data import and export. In addition, ESCWA developed the Arab MDG Virtual Library, which is a comprehensive knowledge sharing platform of national and regional MDG databases, reports and activities.

5. To improve the monitoring and reporting of MDG indicators, ESCWA compiled good practice in MDG report writing, which included the following: production and reporting of disaggregated and subnational MDG data; production and publication of MDG indicators and metadata; definition of complementary MDG targets and indicators; dissemination of MDG data through information and communication technology; improvement of techniques in collection and compilation of MDG data in line with international standards and methods; political commitment; and use of MDG statistics for policymaking. The compilation was produced as a background document for the tenth session of the Statistical Committee (E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/CRP.6).

(c) *Ensuring metadata*

6. ESCWA is compiling available national and international MDG data and metadata. The aim is to assess availability and discrepancies between both sources, to define metadata for each indicator in each source, to monitor progress in the availability of MDG data and convergence between both sources, and to build the capacity of member countries in common areas of major discrepancies.

2. *Supporting member countries*

7. ESCWA produced a web-based metadata handbook on the Arab Gender Goals, Issues and Indicators (Arab Gender GIsIn). The handbook is a tool for producers of gender statistics and aims to build a common methodological knowledge base among stakeholders to facilitate the production of comparable statistics for evidence-based policymaking and planning. During 2012, ESCWA ensured that the *Practical Handbook: MDG Employment Indicators*, which was issued by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), was translated into Arabic. In addition, ESCWA completed the *Conceptual Framework on the Effective Use of Statistics for Policymaking*, a compilation of relevant good practice from national statistical offices, national agencies and United Nations Country Teams.

8. Moreover, ESCWA organized, in cooperation with UNSD and the African Development Bank (AFDB), a workshop on the use of SDMX and DevInfo for MDG data reporting, in Amman, from 10 to 14 July 2011. The objective of the event was to provide training on the national and regional requirements for exchanging metadata and discuss challenges and future plans for better coordination and dissemination of data. The workshop, attended by 19 representatives from 12 national statistical offices, was facilitated by SDMX experts from Metadata Technology and DevInfo.

9. The workshop helped the participants realize the benefits of SDMX, which include the following: (a) improved data quality and availability and reduced data discrepancies; (b) reduced expenses owing to the minimal required maintenance, the availability of free tools and the ease of data and metadata dissemination; (c) reduced response burden and likelihood of errors, as international agencies can directly query data from national databases; (d) improved coordination of national statistical systems owing to instant notification of new or revised data and reduced time lags.

10. ESCWA held a workshop on MDG data reconciliation: employment indicators, in Beirut, from 12 to 13 July 2012 and will hold a similar workshop on water and sanitation by the end of 2012. These workshops aim to improve inter-institutional coordination procedures for the production, description and adjustment of data; strengthen the capacity of member countries to produce statistics and indicators of relevance to MDG indicators on water, sanitation and employment; and enhance participants' understanding of the adjustment and calculation methods of national and international organizations in addition to improving data exchange.

3. *Assessing quality*

11. To assess data quality, ESCWA compiled national data for all member countries on MDG indicators and provided an in-depth assessment of data availability and discrepancies between national and international sources. The assessment can be used as a benchmark to monitor progress. The results of the assessment have been compiled in a report on discrepancies between national and international data sources along with the findings of the workshop on data reconciliation on MDG employment-related indicators mentioned above. The report is presented to the tenth session of the Statistical Committee in document E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/CRP.6.

**II. RESOLUTION 295 (XXVI): GUIDING DECLARATION OF THE ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA ON GIVING
GREATER ATTENTION TO YOUTH POLICIES:
AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DEVELOPMENT**

A. THE RESOLUTION

12. At its twenty-sixth session, ESCWA adopted resolution 295 (XXVI) on the Guiding declaration of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on giving greater attention to youth policies: An opportunity for development. In the resolution, the Commission requested the secretariat to continue its role as a regional hub in several areas, which included “enhancing the role of national statistical offices in member countries in collecting and analysing statistical data on youth, developing multifunctional data systems and databases, and setting indicators and standards in accordance with the policies of each member country.”

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

1. *Data work*

13. The secretariat maintained the Y-Info database on youth data and indicators, including the following: (a) juvenile justice; (b) education; (c) health; (d) demography; (e) leisure-time activities; (f) violence; (g) employment; (h) HIV/AIDS; (i) information and communication technology; (j) poverty; and (k) substance abuse.

14. Data on youth were also included in the Bulletin on Population and Vital Statistics in the ESCWA Region, Issue No. 14; the Compendium of Social Statistics and Indicators, 2010-2011: Arab Society, Issue No. 10; Statistical Abstracts and publications on gender statistics and MDGs. Data pertaining to these publications are currently being loaded into the ESCWA Statistical Information System (ESIS).

2. *Statistical capacity-development*

15. Methodologies related to statistics on youth were tackled through various capacity-development activities, notably workshops on gender statistics and MDG labour statistics. In total, five workshops and two expert group meetings were organized by ESCWA in these areas since the ninth session of the Statistical Committee.

16. In addition, ESCWA is working on a project to strengthen national capacity in social statistics and preparation for the twenty-year review of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD@20), that will be undertaken at a special session of the General Assembly in 2014. The project involves analysis and use of census data that may be relevant to the statistics on youth. In the framework of this project, ESCWA organized three workshops. Parliamentary document E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/CRP.2 provides a more detailed report on the project.

III. ACTION REQUIRED OF THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

17. The Committee is invited:

(a) To take note of and express its views on the progress achieved in the implementation of resolution 297(XXVI) and the statistical component of resolution 295(XXVI);

(b) To recommend the continuation of the work on the Arab MDG monitor for societal progress;

(c) To recommend that ESCWA continues to include issues related to statistics on youth in its data work and capacity-development activities as appropriate.
