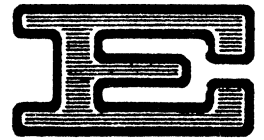




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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

Sixteenth session
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Amman

Item 5(b) of the provisional agenda

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION

FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE COMMISSION AT ITS FIFTEENTH SESSION

- (vii) Resolution 172(XV) on economic and social conditions of the Palestinian Arab people

In its resolution 172(XV) of 18 May 1989 on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian Arab people, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) resolved to continue to follow up the action taken on all resolutions adopted by the Commission at its previous sessions and to help find solutions for existing problems by completing the studies that had been started, bearing in mind the urgent requirements of the Palestinian Arab people for development; and invited Arab financing funds as well as those governments in a position to do so, to support the efforts of the Executive Secretary of ESCWA in securing extrabudgetary resources to enable ESCWA to help the Palestinian Arab people.

In accordance with the provisions of the above-mentioned resolution and within the framework of continuing to act in pursuance of the contents of all resolutions adopted by the Commission at its previous sessions, particularly resolution 139(XII) of 24 April 1985 on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people under occupation, the ESCWA secretariat has been carrying out the following activities.

1. The ESCWA secretariat continued provision of advisory services relating to the Palestinian Arab people to the appropriate quarters, including the Palestinian Central Statistics Office (Damascus) and the Joint Jordanian-Palestinian Committee in the following fields:

(a) Household surveys. The secretariat took part in the preparatory work for a survey of Palestinian children in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon for 1991;

(b) Statistical training;

(c) Data processing;

(d) Statistical analysis.

2. The secretariat is preparing data on population, national accounts, socio-economic conditions, agriculture, trade, energy, finance, transport and communications in the occupied Palestinian territories and publishing such data in studies and statistical abstracts, such as the Statistical Abstract of the Region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Unified Arab Statistical Abstract, the Compendium of Social Statistics, and studies on national accounts.

3. The secretariat has prepared studies on the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian Arab people in the occupied territories as follows:

(a) "Israeli land and water practices and policies in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories" (E/1991/88) is a study submitted in the form of a report from the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Economic and Social Council and then to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session (A/46/263);

(b) "The impact of the Gulf crisis on the economy of occupied Palestinian territories" (in press);

(c) "A feasibility study for setting up a dairy production training centre in the West Bank" was prepared by the secretariat in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

(d) "Unemployment in occupied Palestinian territories, 1968-1991."

4. The secretariat has likewise proceeded with implementation of the following activities:

(a) A study on the regional implications of a peaceful settlement in the Middle East is being prepared in collaboration with the Arab Thought Forum. The four-part study examines the economic, political, security and cultural aspects of a peaceful settlement and is due to be completed in September (1992). It will be the basis of a seminar to be held by ESCWA in 1993 on this extremely important issue;

(b) A study currently being prepared containing an evaluation of land and water resources, an updating and analysis of hydrological and hydrogeological data and the implications of Israeli policies with regard to land and water in the occupied Palestinian territories;

(c) A workshop on planning and evaluation of rural development projects in the occupied Palestinian territories scheduled to be held in the West Bank from 26 July to 11 August 1992.

5. In the field of cooperation and coordination with regional and international bodies:

(a) ESCWA participated in the Seminar on Prospects for the Palestinian Industrial Sector that was organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in Vienna during the period 11 to 13 October 1989. ESCWA submitted a paper entitled "The occupied Palestinian territories; industrial development policies: constraints and prospects";

(b) ESCWA also participated in a meeting held by FAO in Rome during the period 9 to 11 October 1991 relating to problems of the Palestinian agricultural sector in the occupied territories. The secretariat is giving particular attention to the recommendations of the meeting and is following up the implementation of those that can be implemented;

(c) ESCWA also took part in the Expert Group Meeting on Prospects for Sustained Development of the Palestinian Economy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) from 19 to 22 May 1992 at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. ESCWA also participated in the discussion of the papers prepared for UNCTAD's project concerning a study relating to prospects for sustained development of the Palestinian economy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; the study comes within the general framework of the second stage of implementation of this project in accordance with specific scenarios of future economic conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories;

(d) ESCWA, in collaboration with FAO, has proceeded with the preparation of a study on rehabilitation of the agricultural sector in the occupied

Palestinian territories. Coordination is being made with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Jerusalem to fund the study and implement it in the course of this year;

(e) Discussions are under way with the Islamic Development Bank with regard to its proposal for ESCWA's participation in the evaluation of projects funded by the Bank in the occupied Palestinian territories;

(f) The secretariat continues to coordinate with Jerusalem Open University with regard to economic feasibility studies for certain projects intended to be implemented in the West Bank and Gaza Strip;

(g) In Amman, ESCWA held a meeting of experts during the period 16 to 17 December 1991 to consider absorbing returnees in the ESCWA region, with particular focus on available opportunities in the industry sector. Special attention was given at the meeting to returnees to the occupied Palestinian territories;

(h) In implementing resolutions 139(XII) and 172(XV) of 24 April 1982 and 18 May 1989 respectively, which call for the preparation of studies on economic and social conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories aimed at supporting the industrial infrastructure and addressing marketing, financing and labour force problems, ESCWA, the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce in Jordan and the Department of Palestinian Economic Affairs and Planning are participating in preparations for the Conference on Solidarity with Industry and Development in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to be held in September 1992. The key paper for the Conference contains a discussion of: industry issues; marketing and funding of industrial products in the occupied Palestinian territories; backgrounds of a group of investment projects; and the setting up of training centres in the industrial sector in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with the aim of making these investment projects known to Arab, regional and international funding quarters. Therefore invitations will be extended to Arab and foreign Governments, and Arab, regional and international funds that could contribute to finding appropriate solutions to problems of the industrial sector and providing it with the necessary funds.

5. In the area of information and documentation, the secretariat is drawing up a preliminary project for establishing a database for the occupied Palestinian territories which would embrace comprehensive documentary and statistical information. Preliminary work on storing and classification of available documents in this respect has started, and contacts have been made with local institutions concerned with Palestinian studies. Contacts will also be made with certain Arab and international institutions for cooperation and coordination to bring the project into being and support its activities.

