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



## **Report**

### **Eighth session of the Committee on Women Beirut, 4-5 October 2017**

#### **Summary**

The Committee on Women of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its eighth session in Beirut on 4 and 5 October 2017.

The Committee considered measures taken by Arab countries to implement the recommendations made by the Committee at its seventh session; the activities of the ESCWA Centre for Women since the seventh session of the Committee and the adoption of the Muscat Declaration: Towards the Achievement of Gender Justice in the Arab Region; the programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 in the field of women's advancement; and ESCWA efforts to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment and to support member States in meeting their national and international commitments. Three roundtable discussions were held on various key issues for the region, notably violence against women and its economic cost, promoting the women, peace and security agenda by strengthening the role of institutions in promoting gender equality in times of peace and of war, and mainstreaming gender equality in public institutions.

The Committee made several recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat and member States, to be implemented in the next biennium. It also adopted the Beirut Declaration on Building Effective Institutions to Empower Women in the Arab Region.

## CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction .....	1	3
<i>Chapter</i>		
<b>I. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AT ITS EIGHTH SESSION.....</b>	<b>2-5</b>	<b>3</b>
A. Adoption of the Beirut Declaration on Building Effective Institutions to Empower Women in the Arab Region .....	2-3	3
B. Recommendations to ESCWA member States .....	5	5
C. Recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat .....	5	5
<b>II. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>6-63</b>	<b>6</b>
A. Progress made in the advancement of women in the Arab region.....	6-23	6
B. Sustainable Development Goal 5 .....	24-63	9
<b>III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK .....</b>	<b>64-74</b>	<b>15</b>
A. Date and venue .....	64	15
B. Opening .....	65-68	15
C. Attendance .....	69	16
D. Election of officers .....	70	16
E. Adoption of the agenda and proposed organization of work.....	73-71	17
F. Documents .....	74	17
<b>ANNEXES</b>		
<i>Annex I.</i> List of participants .....		18
<i>Annex II.</i> List of documents .....		21

## **Introduction**

1. The Committee on Women held its eighth session at the United Nations House in Beirut, on 4 and 5 October 2017. It considered the items on its agenda, and discussed key issues related to women in the Arab region. It also made recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat and member States, and adopted the Beirut Declaration on Building Effective Institutions to Empower Women in the Arab Region.

### **I. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AT ITS EIGHTH SESSION**

#### **A. ADOPTION OF THE BEIRUT DECLARATION ON BUILDING EFFECTIVE INSTITUTIONS TO EMPOWER WOMEN IN THE ARAB REGION**

2. The Committee adopted the Beirut Declaration on Building Effective Institutions to Empower Women in the Arab Region, set out as follows:

*We*, the ministers, leaders and representatives of national women's machineries in the Arab region, participating in the eighth session of the Committee on Women of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), held in Beirut on 4 and 5 October 2017, affirm our commitment to building solid foundations for women's empowerment by establishing effective institutions in the Arab region;

*Recall* commitments by the Committee on Women in previous declarations and agreements, especially the Kuwait Declaration on Combating Violence against Women adopted on 5 December 2013, which sets out a holistic vision for tackling the multiple dimensions of violence; and the Muscat Declaration: Towards the Achievement of Gender Justice in the Arab Region adopted on 21 January 2016, which stresses the inclusive concept of justice as a means for achieving gender equality and ensuring accountability;

*Welcome* progress in responding to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its Goals and targets, especially in reviewing public plans and policies and linking them to the fifth Sustainable Development Goal on women's advancement, and in strengthening institutional structures;

*Note with deep concern* the significant challenges facing women in a region where many countries are affected by war, conflict, occupation and various forms of terrorism, radicalism and extremist groups, which have negatively impacted development and caused considerable direct and indirect losses, thus restricting institutions supporting women's empowerment;

*Acknowledge* the resulting reconstruction and institution-building needs from such losses, which exacerbate missed development opportunities and the burdens carried by women;

*Recognize* the important role of institutions in times of peace and of war, conflict and beyond in relief and reconstruction efforts, in compensating victims and holding perpetrators to account, and in providing services and protecting individuals; and *affirm* that building strong and effective institutions that protect women from discrimination and violence is a fundamental pillar for achieving gender equality;

*Underscore* the legislation and anti-discrimination procedures required to achieve gender equality, which tackle oppression and prejudice and allow women to access justice to compensate them for their violated rights;

*Acknowledge* the need to develop national plans on women, peace and security to respond to existing and emerging priorities to avoid the negative impact on future generation, to implement Arab countries' commitments, and to secure the necessary financial and human resources;

*Stress* the importance of women's participation in political, economic and social institutions, in conflict resolution and in official delegations and peace talks, given that their involvement provides a positive and effective contribution to peacebuilding and achieving and maintaining development outcomes;

*Affirm* the importance of formulating institutional plans to support gender equality and women's empowerment in public institutions and decision-making bodies at the national level, and *appreciate* the vital role of national women's machineries in implementing and disseminating those plans;

*Commend* efforts in many Arab countries to develop gender-sensitive budgets to increase transparency and accountability so as to meet gender equality commitments;

*Recognize* that all types of violence against women are a source of immense economic pressure on government institutions, entailing prevention, prosecution and compensation measures and the reintegration of survivors and their children into society; and that estimating those costs is an important step towards disseminating evidence-based information for comprehensive reform;

*Acknowledge* the importance of building the capacity of all institutions involved in tackling violence against women, especially hospitals, police forces and social service providers, the need to involve them in policy development and financial resource allocation and in providing training and awareness-raising activities on violence against women;

*Agree* on the need to support least developed countries affected by war and conflict, and assist them in achieving a qualitative leap in development and in building institutions to support women; and stress the importance of supporting the Palestinian people in their struggle against occupation, especially women in Palestine and the occupied Syrian Golan, and its institutions in seeking justice, equality and rights, notably the right to self-determination and to development.

3. On the basis of the above, we commit to the following:

(a) Developing institutional systems to mainstream gender equality in building institutions and formulating their policies and culture, and providing legal foundations to enable institutions to carry out their functions in meeting women's needs in times of peace and of war;

(b) Ensuring the independence of the judiciary and enabling it to apply international conventions and commitments in judicial decisions;

(c) Improving a database on judicial decisions related to discrimination against women, including violence;

(d) Linking national strategies and plans to the 2030 Agenda and its Goals and targets, especially those on women; strengthening institutions' work in line with those Goals and targets; and developing statistical systems to provide the necessary statistics to monitor implementation.

We also appreciate efforts by the ESCWA secretariat, and request it to continue collaborating with relevant international and regional institutions, especially on the following:

(a) Building the capacity of member States in developing national strategies and plans to strengthen women's institutions by producing and disseminating knowledge through research and studies;

(b) Supporting decision-makers and development partners, including civil society organizations, by developing practical methodologies, preparing training material and programmes, and providing evidence to implement national action plans on gender equality.

From Beirut, we renew our commitment to supporting women's empowerment and gender equality.

## B. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ESCWA MEMBER STATES

4. At the conclusion of its eighth session, the Committee on Women issued the following recommendations to ESCWA member States:

(a) Continue supporting the Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals, established pursuant to recommendations by the Committee on Women at its seventh session, by actively participating in its activities, transferring expertise in implementing the fifth Goal of the 2030 Agenda, mainstreaming gender equality in the various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national level, and expanding membership to include all Arab countries;

(b) Intensify efforts to strengthen cooperation between institutions providing statistics on women and those benefiting from them, including national women's machineries tasked with women's empowerment, especially regarding statistics on SDG indicators, particularly SDG 5;

(c) Develop comprehensive institutional systems to manage cases of violence against women; work with the judiciary, the public prosecution, those tasked with implementing the law and all relevant operational sectors to prosecute perpetrators; provide care and rehabilitation for violence survivors and empower them to lead a dignified life; and contribute to developing monitoring systems at the statistical and institutional levels to monitor cases of violence and mechanisms for addressing, categorizing and documenting them;

(d) Conducting research at the national level to calculate the economic cost of violence against women, and encourage policymakers to take appropriate preventative measures and protect women from violence;

(e) Review national policies and strategies to ensure that they cover women, peace and security, and build the capacity of relevant national institutions and facilitate their work to enable them to provide prevention, protection, participation, recovery, relief and reconstruction services;

(f) Develop the necessary legislative and regulatory frameworks on women, peace and security, and continue efforts to formulate, adopt and implement strategies and action plans in that regard while ensuring stakeholder participation, especially civil society participation;

(g) Take note of progress in adapting the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women at the level of national women's machineries, and begin implementing the Action Plan in public institutions;

(h) Strengthen official judicial institutions to limit recourse to traditional non-institutional justice frameworks, so as to advance and empower women and protect their rights;

(i) Take note of progress in implementing the recommendations issued at the seventh session of the Committee on Women and the Muscat Declaration, and of the priorities regarding women proposed in the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019; continue focusing on the main pillars of ESCWA work in the fields of justice and gender equality, women, peace and security, and violence against women; and support countries in implementing the SDGs to ensure maximum impact;

(j) Take note of efforts to strengthen consistency between the ESCWA programme of work and technical cooperation programmes, by translating ESCWA reports and studies into direct technical support to member States through advisory services, workshops and training or guidelines.

## C. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ESCWA SECRETARIAT

5. The Committee on Women made the following recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat:

(a) Develop the methodology of the Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals and its means of addressing the needs of national women's machineries, expand its membership to include all interested Arab countries, and involve statistical offices in its work;

(b) Provide information on SDG 5 on a continual basis to the Committee on Women, and build capacity to provide information related to SDG 5 indicators;

(c) Support national women's machineries in implementing a model on the economic cost of violence against women, in accordance with the circumstances and specificities of each society;

(d) Disseminate to national women's machineries the methodology of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women;

(e) Work with member States to disseminate knowledge on women, peace and security, and continue studying mechanisms and ways to implement that agenda in Arab countries, focusing on institutions' role in its implementation, and continue providing technical cooperation services and exchanging expertise to support member States' efforts in developing national policies and action plans to build their capacity in this field;

(f) Study judicial mechanisms that consider cases of discrimination against women to identify gaps therein, and propose the necessary recommendations and policies to plug them;

(g) Continue providing technical support to public institutions, including national women's machineries, by developing capacity-building tools to support the implementation of the Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and by providing guidance.

## **II. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION**

### **A. PROGRESS MADE IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN THE ARAB REGION (Agenda item 4)**

#### **1. *Activities related to women advancement in the ESCWA programme of work, the Muscat Declaration on the Achievement of Gender Justice, and recommendations of the Committee on Women* (Agenda item 4 (a))**

6. With reference to document E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/3(Part I), the representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the activities and programmes undertaken by the ESCWA Centre for Women since the seventh session of the Committee on Women, pursuant to the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017 and the recommendations made by the Committee to the ESCWA secretariat at its seventh session, and on the implementation of the Muscat Declaration adopted at the seventh session.

7. Those activities had focused on key issues for the Centre for Women, namely violence against women; gender justice; women, peace and security; the SDGs; and mainstreaming gender equality in institutions. The presentation covered the Centre's work methodology that stressed the importance of translating evidence-based analytical studies and research projects into advisory services and capacity-building programmes for member States. It also reviewed studies, research and reports, expert group meetings, training workshops, projects and events, and information material prepared and implemented by ESCWA within the framework of its support to member States.

8. In the ensuing discussion, member States' representatives welcomed progress in implementing the recommendations made at the seventh session of the Committee, especially efforts to estimate the cost of marital violence against women in the Arab region, and support for issues of women, peace and security through the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). They stressed the need to strengthen

synergies between all parties to implement proposed projects, and focused on the importance of ESCWA support in evaluating country initiatives in ESCWA areas of specialization to understand their impact on societies. They also expressed interest in the process of estimating the cost of violence against women, and requested clarification on its implementation in country specific contexts.

9. The Minister of Women's Affairs of the State of Palestine thanked the ESCWA Centre for Women for its support to her country through a pioneering study on estimating the cost of marital violence against women. The representative of Jordan also thanked the Centre for its tireless efforts and support to her country over the past two years, especially in mainstreaming gender in public institutions.

*2. Technical cooperation activities and advisory services*  
(Agenda item 4 (b))

10. With reference to document E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/3(Part II), the representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on technical support provided by ESCWA to member States on gender justice, the women, peace and security agenda, estimating the cost of marital violence against women in the Arab region, considering interlinkages between the SDGs, and disseminating the concept of gender equality.

11. The presentation showcased ESCWA efforts to implement the Muscat Declaration over the biennium 2016-2017. ESCWA had worked with 16 member States on the following issues: implementing Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security; supporting country efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, especially SDG 5, in line with national contexts; and mainstreaming gender equality in public institutions.

12. Under the women, peace and security framework, ESCWA had offered technical support to the United Arab Emirates in formulating a national action plan on Security Council resolution 1325. Efforts were also underway to assist other member States, including Lebanon, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic, in preparing similar action plans. ESCWA had provided technical support to the Ministry of Women's Affairs of the State of Palestine in using the regional model to estimate the cost of marital violence against women in the Arab region. Regarding the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, many member States, including Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, the State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic, had benefited from capacity-building efforts for their implementation. Technical assistance on gender equality had taken many forms. In Lebanon, for example, ESCWA had provided support to the Ministry of Women's Affairs to align SDG 5 with the national context and needs, had trained the judiciary to implement CEDAW, and had hosted workshops on the role of women in politics. In the State of Palestine, ESCWA had held workshops on women, peace and security, and supported national efforts to tackle domestic violence.

13. In the ensuing discussion, representatives commended ESCWA efforts and technical support provided over the biennium 2016-2017, and the resulting broader discussions on gender equality and women, peace and security and on the need to raise awareness and conduct evaluations following the completion of projects.

14. Representatives expressed interest in continuing work on the women, peace and security agenda, including developing national action plans to promote activities that complied with the agenda. Conflict-affected countries, such as Yemen, called for more effective ways to tackle gender-based violations suffered by women and children, within the framework of the women, peace and security framework.

*3. Actions taken by member States pursuant to the recommendations  
of the Committee on Women*  
(Agenda item 4 (c))

15. Under this sub-item, representatives of Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, the State of Palestine, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic gave presentations on measures taken by their countries to implement the recommendations made by the Committee at its seventh session.

16. Representatives reviewed the measures taken to implement the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, and highlighted efforts to align the SDGs with national plans and to form national committees comprising all stakeholders to follow up on their implementation and secure the necessary budgets, in addition to providing statistics for indicators to monitor the implementation of SDG 5 and other SDG targets related to gender equality and women's empowerment. They also indicated their participation in the activities and work of the ESCWA Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals.

17. Representatives showcased efforts to implement international agreements and submit related periodic reports, especially on CEDAW and considered actions to lift reservations to some of its articles. They affirmed continuing efforts to harmonize national legislation with international agreements, and to work on enacting or amending laws to enhance women's rights, including laws on violence against women, penalties, employment and retirement, the family, quota systems, parliamentary and municipal participation, and membership in local councils and political parties. They stressed the existence of political will to support women's advancement, strengthen gender equality, and ensure women's participation in all areas.

18. Presentations covered measures to eliminate violence against women, including by enacting and passing laws, developing plans and strategies, launching awareness-raising campaigns for society and victims on available care and legal aid and on mechanisms to monitor cases on violence and provide assistance. The representative of the State of Palestine considered current efforts to study the economic cost of violence against women, and to pilot an economic model on violence in the State of Palestine under a joint project with ESCWA and UN Women. The representative of Jordan indicated her country's determination to work with ESCWA to implement a project to estimate the economic cost of violence against women.

19. Representatives reviewed implemented measures to provide legal assistance to women and facilitate their access to justice; training programmes for the police and judiciary on women and gender equality issues; and legal, political, economic and social awareness-raising programmes on women's rights.

20. Presentations also covered national efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, especially regarding developing national plans for its implementation and allocating budgets to that end. They also reviewed implemented programmes and activities to raise awareness of the resolution, provide protection and relief services to the displaced, and offer training to aid workers.

21. The presentations highlighted progress in mainstreaming gender equality in public institutions and in developing national strategies in general, and those relating to women in particular; and achievements in supporting national women's machineries and providing them with human and financial resources to implement their functions, and in operationalizing gender units in public institutions. Representatives stressed the need to adopt a regional framework for gender equality in public institutions and align it with national strategies. The representative of Jordan reviewed current efforts in her country under a programme to mainstream gender equality in public institutions, whereby the Jordanian National Commission for Women had audited gender sensitivity in its work. She said that the process would result in the implementation of a remedial plan to enable the National Commission to fulfil its mandate internally, prior to disseminating the experience at the public sector level.

22. Representatives indicated ongoing and varied measures by their countries to promote women's participation in the economy, including through income-generating projects, programmes to make families more productive, and grants and loans, with some countries including that approach in their priorities.

23. In conclusion, representatives confirmed the importance of continued support from the ESCWA Centre for Women, and continued communication through participation in its activities, events and training sessions.



## B. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5

### 1. *Gender equality indicators: data availability in Arab countries* (Agenda item 5 (a))

24. Under this sub-item, the representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/4(Part I) that focused on the following two issues: gender statistics, and the SDGs. The presentation examined gender statistics, which were not limited to gender-disaggregated data, but also included indicators on the status of women in all fields. It also highlighted the importance of translating data into information, information into knowledge, and knowledge into procedures; and the need to diversify data sources, to harmonize public institutions' efforts, notably those of national statistical offices and national women's machineries, and to strengthen coordination and partnerships between data producers and users for evidence-based policymaking.

25. The presentation also covered the availability of data for gender equality indicators in the Arab region to monitor the SDGs, especially SDG 5 on gender equality, and to prepare related reports. It explained the United Nations Statistics Division's classification of indicators into the following three tiers according to their availability and methodology:

- Tier 1: Indicator has an internationally established methodology, and data are available on a wide scale;
- Tier 2: Indicator has an internationally established methodology, but data are not readily available;
- Tier 3: No internationally established methodology, but a methodology will be developed.

26. The presentation set out the findings of a regional evaluation on data availability for tier 1, which included national data along with international data used to fill gaps in national data. Evaluation findings showed weak availability of national data in the SDG Indicators Global Database caused by a lack of data or by weak data collection at the country level; incompatibility between collected data and international standards; or the lack of official data dissemination.

27. The presentation reviewed an ESCWA gender statistics programme comprising a series of bulletins and documents on the status of gender statistics collection in Arab countries, and of technical material on gender equality issues.

28. The presentation considered key challenges facing countries in data collection, including lack of coverage in most countries, weak systematic data production at the country level, the absence of international standards in all indicators thus eliminating comparability, weak complex knowledge in all fields given the comprehensive nature of gender equality covered by all 17 SDGs, and the lack of detail in data sets thus complicating data disaggregation by sex, age and geographic location.

29. The ensuing discussion tackled potential support by ESCWA to assist member States in providing data to follow up and evaluate progress in implementing the SDGs, especially SDG 5. Representatives stressed the need to provide data on all social segments, including children, older persons, women and vulnerable groups.

30. They also discussed the role of national machineries in coordinating between national institutions producing gender equality statistics, notably national statistical offices.

### 2. *Activities to support the Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals in 2016-2017* (Agenda item 5 (b))

31. Under this sub-item, the representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/4(Part II) on the technical assistance activities of the Centre for Women, particularly support for the Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals. At its

seventh session, the Committee on Women had recommended member States to strengthen the role of national women's machineries in implementing the gender-related SDGs. It had also recommended the ESCWA secretariat to lead national and regional efforts to achieve those Goals and develop national plans, monitoring and follow-up policies and indicator collection mechanisms to ensure the mainstreaming of gender equality in all sectors.

32. In that context, a subcommittee had been formed, comprising heads and high-level representatives of national women's machineries from 16 ESCWA member States (Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, State of Palestine, Qatar, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen). The Subcommittee was tasked with following up on the implementation of the gender equality aspects of the 2030 Agenda, with ESCWA acting as its secretariat. ESCWA was collaborating with UN Women and the League of Arab States in implementing the Subcommittee's activities, by equipping member States with necessary skills and informing them of key developments at the regional and international levels. In turn, Subcommittee members transferred the gained expertise and skills to countries. At its seventh session, the Committee on Women had recommended the ESCWA secretariat to work with national women's machineries in developing national plans to implement the 2030 Agenda, unify national and regional processes for achieving the 2030 Agenda, and ensure consistency between the gender-related SDGs and other international commitments, especially the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

33. Many activities had been implemented since the Subcommittee's establishment, such as preparing technical material, building capacity, and facilitating knowledge exchange. Regarding technical material, ESCWA had developed a guide on global gender equality goals and a study on national strategies on women from the perspective of the SDGs and the 2030 vision on gender equality in the Arab region. Concerning capacity-building, ESCWA, in collaboration with its partners, had held four workshops to build Subcommittee members' capacity on the SDGs and the basic indicators developed by the League of Arab States to monitor the status of women and sustainable development in the Arab region under the 2030 Agenda, to align national gender equality strategies with the SDGs, and to measure and monitor women's representation in local governments in the Arab region. With regard to exchanging and benefiting from knowledge and national experiences, an electronic platform had been developed and several workshops had been held in that regard.

34. The representative of the League of Arab States affirmed its commitment to gender equality, and to the partnership between ESCWA and UN Women in implementing the activities of the Subcommittee. She stressed the importance of the Subcommittee and the need to expand its membership to include all Arab countries. She highlighted efforts in the field of data collection, and mentioned a survey conducted by the League on the basis of which 12 reports had been prepared.

35. The representative of UN Women commended the Subcommittee's role, and supported the League of Arab State's request to expand its membership. He said that the Subcommittee was an example of South-South cooperation and collaboration between regional and national actors to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. He stressed the importance of partnerships, especially regarding SDG implementation and related data collection, and of gender-sensitive national policies and strategies, and the need to support the preparation of national reports on the 2030 Agenda and user-friendly material for dissemination at the regional level.

36. Representatives commended the Subcommittee's important role, stressing the need to expand its membership to cover all members of the League of Arab States and national statistical offices in the region. They underscored the importance of the proposed project to support the Subcommittee's work for which ESCWA and UN Women were striving to secure funding, of aligning national strategies with SDG 5 and related targets, of supporting the publication of national reports on SDG 5, and of sharing results at the international level with member States.

3. *Enhancing the role of institutions in achieving gender equality in the Arab region*  
(Agenda item 6)

37. Under this item, the Committee on Women held three roundtable discussions.

(a) *Mainstreaming gender equality in public institutions*  
(Agenda item 6 (a))

38. The first discussion focused on strengthening the role of institutions in achieving gender equality in the Arab region, with reference to document E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/5(Part I). The discussion addressed the concept of gender equality in public institutions and stressed its importance. It also highlighted the significance of an internal system in public institutions to ensure active women's participation in their work. An innovative framework was presented, based on United Nations experience, which focused on mainstreaming gender equality in public institutions. The Chair of the session, Ms. Paula Yaqubian, began the discussion by indicating the absence of women in decision-making positions despite their employment in institutions, and called for greater equality between men and women.

39. Mr. Jean Oghassapian, Minister of State for Women's Affairs of Lebanon, discussed the recent establishment of a Ministry of State for Women's Affairs in his country following repeated demands from and long struggles by civil society organizations and women's groups to achieve justice and equality. He indicated the speed with which the Ministry had been established, its staff appointed, its budget secured, and its strategies and frameworks developed. He reviewed the Ministry's work in amending legal texts, and in communicating with donors to secure funding for projects, and with civil society organizations to support their activities. In a short time, the Ministry had gained credibility and institutionalized its work, thus contributing to increasing gender equality in Lebanon. He said that the status of women was currently under consideration. Regarding obstacles, he indicated the Personal Status Law and how it was impacted by the numerous sects in Lebanon, and how some groups rejected the presence of women in political positions.

40. Ms. Naziha Laabidi, Minister of Women, Family and Childhood of Tunisia, gave an overview of the historic Tunisian women's process since 1956. She indicated the 2014 constitution, in which the State had enshrined women's rights, and Tunisian faith in the role of institutions in promoting equality. She mentioned the establishment of the National Council of Peers for Equality and Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, the first of its kind in the Arab region. She reviewed the various achievements of 2017, including issuing a basic law on violence against women and a law on maternal and paternal child custody, and abolishing publication No. 73 that prohibited the marriage of Tunisian Muslim women to non-Muslim men. She also indicated the political will that accompanied the social mentality that was ready for change, which had made Tunisian women efficient development partners.

41. Ms. Soumoud abu Saae, judge at the Office of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Courts of Palestine, said that the President had allowed women to work in the judiciary since 2009, enabling her to become the first woman to head the Palestinian Sharia Prosecution in 2010. She mentioned the controversy caused by women holding positions in Sharia courts, although no controversy had arisen when women were authorized to handle criminal cases. Acceptance had come as a result of the President's decision, which had forcefully broken barriers and made the presence of women in judicial positions in Sharia courts a reality. She stressed the importance of women's presence in the judiciary, since women were more comfortable sharing certain issues and details with women judges, and of women's vital role in developing plans.

42. Ms. Rouba Arja, ESCWA Social Affairs Officer, presented the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, stating that the Plan's main objective was to mainstream gender equality in institutions, with efforts usually focused on strategies and plans thus overlooking institutions' internal workings. She gave an overview of the Action Plan's background and indicators, and on ESCWA experience in achieving its aims internally and the changes resulting from its implementation. Following the classification of ESCWA as one of the top United Nations organizations in

implementing the Action Plan, it was necessary to transfer expertise to institutions in member States. Work had begun to align the Action Plan with national contexts and to develop a unified Arab framework on gender equality. She said that work was currently underway to pilot the framework in Jordan, whose experience would then be disseminated to all member States, and to prepare other information material.

43. Ms. Salma al-Nems, Secretary-General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women, spoke of the establishment of the National Commission in 1992 and its functions and powers. She indicated measures to improve women's labour force participation, such as developing plans and programmes targeting both men and women, since it was necessary to address the male mentality and awareness to bring about real change, and amending institutions' internal systems to enable women to reach decision-making positions and liberate them from stereotypes regarding their social and traditional roles. She stressed the importance of widespread cultural change, since women could not alter their reality through their personal space alone. She noted the interest of Jordan in the project to mainstream gender presented by ESCWA at the seventh session of the Committee on Women, and its decision to adopt the indicators of a unified Arab framework and to transfer the experience to the government level. She said that work had begun on a participatory audit of gender equality in the National Commission's work that had resulted in several conclusions, including the existence of flexible policies and weak capacity to mainstream gender equality in policies and plans. In the next phase, the Commission would work on developing a remedial plan to achieve an internal qualitative leap, which could then be transferred to the Jordanian public sector.

44. Ms. Rania Ahmed al Jarf, Director of the Department of Equal Opportunities of the Supreme Council of Women of Bahrain, said that her country had been a pioneer in assisting ESCWA to fund the project on mainstreaming gender equality, given its belief that the project would benefit all Arab countries by providing specific indicators supporting women. She mentioned a national model to mainstream women's needs in development and collaboration with the private sector, aligning the experience of Bahrain with the standardized Arab framework on gender equality. By disseminating the standardized Arab framework to the Supreme Council of Women, it had been possible to identify gaps that needed bridging before disseminating the experience at the national level. She encouraged all Arab countries to adopt that framework.

45. Ms. Tania Moussallem, Assistant General Manager of the Lebanese Bank of Commerce, reviewed the outlook of the World Economic Forum, which estimated that gender equality would be achieved in 170 years if work continued at the current pace. She added that women's active role in economics had significant benefits. The experience of the Lebanese Bank of Commerce had shown that gender equality could result in 30 per cent growth, and that the presence of women in high-level positions expedited growth and increased profit. Given its faith in women's capacity, the Bank had developed a comprehensive programme to economically empower women, and launched a programme of loans without collateral to assist women in growing their businesses. It had also launched the Mother Child Account, giving women the opportunity to open accounts for their children. The programme also comprised a non-financial aspect to support women in all areas, such as training, guidance and opportunities. The programme had received several awards, and the Bank had shared that experience with various institutions and other banks. She listed the programme's success factors, including a strong will from decision centres, effective male participation, clear and measurable goals, gender-disaggregated data, and comprehensive training and awareness-raising. She also stressed the vital role of the public sector in motivating the private sector.

(b) *Role of institutions in times of peace and war*  
(Agenda item 6 (b))

46. The second roundtable discussion focused on the role of institutions in times of peace and war, with reference to document E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/5(Part II). The discussion was chaired by Mr. Abdulhussein Shaaban, Iraqi academic and expert in the field of human rights, conflict, disputes and war.

47. The discussion covered the role of private, public, national and non-governmental institutions in the advancement of women, and the impact of conflict on their capacity to fulfil their roles and provide various

services. The discussion also reviewed the experiences of Arab countries that had prepared national plans to implement the women, peace and security agenda, focusing on the country impact of those plans in times of peace and of war. The discussion aimed to highlight best practices to urge countries to implement resolution 1325 and its related resolutions. Civil society was given an opportunity to express its views and explain its role in supporting countries in implementing international commitments, and outlined the challenges faced by all parties in implementing the women, peace and security agenda.

48. The representative of the secretariat said that the women, peace and security agenda involved all countries, whether or not they were affected by conflict. He set out the following three interlinked elements vital to achieving the women, peace and security agenda: ensuring gender equality in the agenda's many dimensions (participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery); ending conflicts, including combating terrorism; and mainstreaming gender equality in institutions and partnerships between institutions. Interventions stressed the importance of institution-building processes following the end of conflicts, and their role in avoiding conflict renewal by building trust in institutions that treated all individuals equally and allowed for their full participation, including in civil society.

49. Interventions by Iraq and the Sudan focused on national efforts to prepare and implement national plans on the women, peace and security agenda. Iraq presented its experiences in developing a plan highlighting the role of institutions, in forming a working group to follow up on the agenda's implementation, and in holding various awareness-raising sessions thereon. The Sudan presented the steps it had taken in preparing a plan that took into account its political nature and identity as an Arab African country. Interventions also considered regional efforts by the League of Arab States to place the women, peace and security agenda on the agenda of its ministerial meeting. The civil society intervention underscored its vital role in determining individual needs at the social level, and finding solutions to provide institutional support in relief operations to better meet women's needs in places of refuge.

(c) *Economic cost of violence against women*  
(Agenda item 6 (c))

50. With reference to document E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/5(Part III), the secretariat held a third roundtable discussion on estimating the economic cost of violence against women in the Arab region, under the ESCWA and UN Women project. Ms. Khawla Matar, ESCWA Deputy Executive Secretary, chaired the discussion.

51. Ms. Nata Dufoury, an international expert on estimating the economic cost of violence against women, gave an overview of the approach and its main features. She presented its impact on global policies to date, and discussed the possible methodologies for conducting processes to estimate the cost in the Arab region. She said that those various methodologies aimed to highlight the economic impact of violence against women at the household, community, business and national levels. She invited member States to consider a study by ESCWA and UN Women entitled "Estimating costs of marital violence in the Arab region: operational model", which proposed a comprehensive methodology that Arab countries could adopt.

52. Ms. Mehrinaz Elawady, Director of the ESCWA Centre for Women, presented a regional project on estimating the economic costs of violence against women in the Arab region, which ESCWA was implementing in collaboration with UN Women. She said that the project aimed to build Arab countries' institutional capacity to estimate the costs of violence against women so as to propose comprehensive political reforms. She stressed that such estimates would enable member States to understand the costs of not taking measures to tackle violence against women, and provided evidence to improve their responses in that regard and to develop policies to combat such violence. She highlighted the importance of national institutions in tackling violence against women, indicating the need to support them, especially in situations of instability or conflict. She proposed that member States provide all related national data to more accurately measure the impact of violence against women on health, education and social services.

53. Ms. Najla al-Aadly, the representative of Egypt, said that her country was the first in the region to determine the economic cost of violence against women in 2015. She expressed her displeasure that the ESCWA secretariat had not sufficiently highlighted the Egyptian experience, given that it was a pioneering approach in the Arab region. She requested that it be described as a foundation on which to combat violence in the region. She said that her country had launched a national action plan in 2015 to tackle violence against women. She set out the steps followed by the National Council for Women, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund, in implementing the cost-estimation process, including designing household surveys, training interviewers, collecting data from various government sources, conducting statistical analysis, and preparing reports on findings. The survey found that around 7.8 million women had been subjected to violence in 2015 by their partner or another family member. The total cost of violence against women was estimated at 2.17 billion Egyptian pounds in one year. She reviewed the lessons learned from that process, including the need for close cooperation with national statistical offices. She added that the process of estimating the cost of violence against women had provided evidence to amend policies.

54. Ms. Haifa al-Agha, Minister of Women's Affairs of the State of Palestine, highlighted the two-fold violence faced by women in Palestine: violence similar to that faced by women in other Arab countries, and violence resulting from living under occupation. She stressed the presence of strong high-level political support for empowering Palestinian women. She said that it was necessary to resist views claiming that women should be submissive to men, starting with the manner in which families raised their boys and girls. She underscored other challenges that the State of Palestine was striving to resolve, such as providing employment opportunities for women, and improving women's poor living standards that force them to remain in abusive relationships. She described the role of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, which was spearheading initiatives in that regard. It had launched a national strategy on gender equality and a strategy to implement resolution 1325, and was working with other ministries to implement a gender-sensitive budget and the gender related SDGs. She confirmed that eliminating violence against women was a priority for the Ministry of Women's Affairs, which had recently launched a programme to provide shelter for violence survivors. It was also currently conducting a process to estimate the economic cost of violence against women, in collaboration with ESCWA and UN Women. The process would show the high cost of violence, and provide evidence to support the development of a violence-free society.

55. Following the discussion, representatives requested further clarification on several issues, focusing particularly on the methodologies and dimensions that must be taken into account when calculating the economic cost of violence against women. The representatives of Egypt and the State of Palestine and Ms. Dufoury responded to their questions. It should be noted that such issues were also tackled in two studies by ESCWA and UN Women prepared under their joint project.

#### *4. Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 in the advancement of women (Agenda item 7)*

56. Document E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/6 set out the proposed ESCWA activities for the biennium 2018-2019 in the field of women's advancement. Those activities had been developed with reference to subprogramme 6 on women's advancement under the ESCWA strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019, adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-ninth session (Doha, 13-15 December 2017). The programme of work in the field of women's advancement constituted part of the complete ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019, endorsed by the Executive Committee at its third session (Rabat, 6-7 May 2017). The ESCWA Centre for Women was responsible for implementing subprogramme 6.

57. Under this item, the representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019, with reference to document E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/6. She requested the Committee on Women to comment on the extent to which its activities met member States' priorities, and their contribution to achieving the expected accomplishments in the field of women's advancement under subprogramme 6. She also reviewed the strategic framework from the perspective of the Centre for Women's outlook, aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering women in line with international agreements and

conferences. She highlighted the Centre's expected accomplishments linked to several issues, such as strengthening national institutional and legal frameworks to achieve gender equality and justice, including eliminating violence against women; promoting the mainstreaming of gender equality in national policies; and improving the monitoring and evaluation of regional and institutional commitments on gender equality undertaken by member States.

58. The representative of the secretariat said that implementing the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 in the field of women's advancement depended on partnerships with national women's machineries and other national bodies concerned with women's issues and with United Nations agencies and regional organizations, in accordance with their expertise. She also mentioned the following external factors necessary for successfully implementing the ESCWA programme of work: political will to strengthen the role of national women's machineries and enhance dialogue with civil society; a stable political situation in the region; protecting gender equality gains from current political changes in the region.

59. She also considered the expected accomplishments, including servicing intergovernmental meetings and expert group meetings on women's issues; preparing recurrent and non-recurrent studies and publications, technical material, brochures, fact sheets, wall posters, information materials and events funded from the regular budget. She stressed the need to be flexible in determining outputs and revising them when necessary to promptly respond to emerging issues in the region.

60. Participants agreed to grant sufficient flexibility to the activities of the Centre for Women by amending the proposed items in the action plan, in line with the region's priorities. Work would continue on the project to calculate the cost of violence against women, and concerted efforts would be made to secure an external budget to build the capacity of the Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals.

*5. Date and venue of the ninth session of the Committee on Women*  
(Agenda item 8)

61. Participants agreed to hold the ninth session of the Committee on Women at the United Nations House in Beirut in 2019, provided that no other member State requested to host the session.

*6. Other matters*  
(Agenda item 9)

62. No matters were discussed under this item.

*7. Adoption of the recommendations made by the Committee on Women at its eighth session*  
(Agenda item 10)

63. The recommendations of the eighth session of the Committee on Women were reviewed and adopted as amended.

### **III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

#### **A. DATE AND VENUE**

64. The Committee on Women held its eighth session at the United Nations House in Beirut, on 4 and 5 October 2017.

#### **B. OPENING**

65. Mr. Yahya bin Badr al Maouli, representative of Oman that had chaired the seventh session of the Committee, gave an opening statement in which he welcomed participants. He commended the large attendance at the session and the outstanding efforts by Arab countries over the past two years to implement the recommendations made at the seventh session and the Muscat Declaration. He stressed the need for joint

efforts between member States through the Committee to support women's issues, achieve gender equality, and continue implementing the Committee's recommendations. He underscored the great importance Oman assigned to women's issues by mainstreaming them in national strategies and abiding by all related international agreements. He called for strengthening the role of non-governmental organizations, totalling 62 organizations for Omani women, and for broadening voluntary work. Lastly, he thanked the ESCWA secretariat and all participants, especially participating ministers, and expressed his hope that the session would reach recommendations that served women's rights and issues in the Arab region.

66. Mr. Mohamed Ali Alhakim, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCWA, gave an opening statement in which he welcomed participants and thanked Oman for chairing the seventh session of the Committee on Women. He wished the State of Palestine every success in chairing the current session. He reviewed the successes achieved in the field of gender equality in the previous year, notably various legislation enacted by countries on institutionalizing women's rights and protecting them from violence. He mentioned Arab countries' efforts in preparing national plans to improve women's status in general, and specialized plans in vital fields such as combating violence against women and implementing the women, peace and security agenda. He highlighted the outcomes of ESCWA work, especially in developing improved mechanisms to meet member States' needs in strengthening women's rights. ESCWA had conducted many theoretical and practical studies whose findings would be translated into development projects benefiting all member States in developing their policies on women's status, empowerment and social standing. He mentioned the vital role of the Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals in advancing joint work on implementing and measuring progress in achieving the gender-related SDGs.

67. He said that despite positive developments in ensuring social equality and justice in Arab societies and reforms aimed at strengthening women's rights and participation, it was impossible to ignore the considerable challenges facing some Arab countries, such as hostilities and conflicts that threatened peace and impeded the advancement of societies, notably the occupation suffered by Palestinian women. He stressed the determination to support the work of the Committee on Women despite the difficulties facing the region, so as to advance and empower women and improve their status.

68. Mr. Jean Oghassapian, Minister of State for Women's Affairs of Lebanon, gave a statement in which he confirmed the pivotal role of women in all sectors, stressing that women's issues were society's issues. He said that the establishment of the Ministry for Women's Affairs in Lebanon was a key step towards integrated women's advancement at the national level, reflecting a real political will to empower women and achieve gender equality, especially given the speed with which the Ministry was established and allocated a budget. He underscored the Ministry's determination to move forward in supporting women's advancement, the great potential and capacity enjoyed by women in Lebanon, and the need to provide them with opportunities to participate and contribute in all sectors at all levels.

### C. ATTENDANCE

69. The session was attended by representatives of national machineries for women, ministries, councils and committees on women from 16 ESCWA member States. Observers included representatives of United Nations specialized agencies and programmes, governmental and non-governmental regional and international organizations accredited by the Economic and Social Council; other governmental organizations; national and regional networks; several research centres; and bilateral and multilateral national and regional donors. A number of experts, advisors and academics were also in attendance. The list of participants is set out in annex I to the present report.

### D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

70. Pursuant to article 18 of the Rules of Procedure of ESCWA, which provides that member States shall assume the presidency of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in Arabic alphabetical order as established by the United Nations, the State of Palestine assumed the presidency of the eighth session,



succeeding Oman, which had assumed the presidency of the seventh session from 20 January 2016 to 4 October 2017. The Committee elected the representative of Oman by consensus as First Vice-Chair and the representative of Qatar as Second Vice-Chair. The representative of Kuwait was elected as Rapporteur.

#### E. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND PROPOSED ORGANIZATION OF WORK

71. At its first meeting, the eighth session of the Committee on Women adopted the following proposed agenda as set out in document E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/L.1.

72. The agenda contained the following items:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. Progress made in the advancement of women in the Arab region:
  - (a) Activities related to women advancement in the ESCWA programme of work, the Muscat Declaration on the Achievement of Gender Justice, and recommendations of the Committee on Women;
  - (b) Technical cooperation activities and advisory services;
  - (c) Actions taken by member States pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee on Women.
5. Sustainable Development Goal 5:
  - (a) Gender equality indicators;
  - (b) Activities of the Subcommittee on Gender and the Sustainable Development Goals in 2016-2017;
  - (c) Actions taken by member States to implement SDG 5.
6. Enhancing the role of institutions in achieving gender equality in the Arab region (three roundtable discussions on the main theme of the session):
  - (a) Gender mainstreaming of public institutions;
  - (b) The role of institutions in times of peace and war;
  - (c) The economic cost of violence against women.
7. Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 in the advancement of women.
8. Date and venue of the ninth session of the Committee on Women.
9. Other matters.
10. Adoption of the recommendations made by the Committee on Women at its eighth session.

73. The Committee also adopted the proposed organization of work, as set out in document E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/L.1.

#### F. DOCUMENTS

74. Annex II to the present report lists the documents presented to the Committee on Women at its eighth session (E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/INF.2).

## Annex I

### **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

#### **A. ESCWA MEMBER STATES**

##### Bahrain

Ms. Rania Ahmed Abdul Ghaffar al-Jarf  
Director of the department for equal opportunities  
Supreme Council of Women

##### Egypt

Ms. Najla Mohammed al-Aadly  
General Director of the Public Administration  
of External Relations  
National Council for Women

Ms. Shiriut Ibrahim Mustafa Attiyeh  
Office of the President of the National Council  
for Women  
National Council for Women

##### Iraq

Ms. Zekra Alloush  
Chair of the National Committee for the  
Advancement of Iraqi Women

Ms. Khawla Musa Mohamed Ali  
Public Affairs Section  
Baghdad Secretariat

##### Jordan

Ms. Salma al-Nems  
Secretary-General  
Jordanian National Commission for Women

##### Kuwait

Ms. Badria Nawar Fahd Jaber  
Coordinator (between the Women's Affairs  
Committee and the Government)  
Women's Affairs Committee

##### Lebanon

Mr. Jean Ogasapian  
Minister of State for Women's Affairs

Ms. Abeer Shbaro  
Adviser to the Prime Minister on Women's Affairs  
Adviser to the Minister of State for Women's  
Affairs

##### Mauritania

Ms. Zainab bint Moussa Ould Cheikh Saidya  
Director of Women's Promotion  
Ministry of Social Affairs, Childhood and Family

##### Morocco

Ms. Sandas Halimi  
Chair of the National Observatory on the Image of  
Women in the Media  
Directorate of Women Affairs

##### Oman

Mr. Yahya bin Badr al Maouli  
Deputy Ministry of Social Development  
Ministry of Social Development

Ms. Jamila bint Salem Jaddad  
Director of Women's Affairs  
Ministry of Social Development

##### State of Palestine

Ms. Haifa Fahmi al-Agha  
Minister of Women's Affairs

Ms. Randa Janho  
Director-General  
Ministry of Women's Affairs

##### Qatar

Mr. Mohamed al Saadi  
International Relations Director  
Qatar Social Work Foundation

Ms. Nour Saleh al Hor  
Rehabilitation Director  
Protection and Social Rehabilitation Centre

Ms. Nada Mekki  
Project Coordinator  
Ministry of State for Women's Affairs

#### Saudi Arabia

Ms. Hala bint al-Mazid al Towayjri  
Secretary-General of the Council of Family Affairs  
Ministry of Labour and Social Development

Ms. Sarah bint Abdul Aziz bin Saif  
International Advisor  
Ministry of Labour and Social Development

Mr. Majed ben Awad al Nfayi  
Assistant Director General of the Directorate  
General of Legal Affairs  
Ministry of Labour and Social Development

#### Sudan

Ms. Machaer Ahmad al-Amin Abdullah  
Minister of Welfare and Social Security  
Ministry of Welfare and Social Security

Ms. Suad Abdul Aal al Taher Abdullah  
Secretary-General of the National Council for  
Child Welfare  
Ministry of Welfare and Social Security

#### Syrian Arab Republic

Ms. Rana Khalfaoui Jazarili  
Director of the Family Affairs Department  
Syrian Commission for Family and Population  
Affairs  
Tunisia

Ms. Eman al Doraysi  
Minister Delegate to the Embassy in Lebanon

#### United Arab Emirates

Mr. Hamdan al-Hashemi  
Chargé d'Affaires  
Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Lebanon

#### Yemen

Ms. Maha Mohammed al Borayhi  
Counsellor for the Embassy of Yemen in Lebanon

### B. UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS

#### United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

Regional Office of the United Nations Entity  
for Gender Equality and the Empowerment  
of Women

Mr. Mohammed Naciri  
Regional Director  
Cairo

Ms. Sarah Bern  
Programmes Expert  
Cairo

Ms. Blerta Aliko  
Deputy Regional Director for the Arab States  
Cairo

Ms. Bigona Lasajaster  
President of Leadership and Governance  
New York

#### United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Ms. Nada al Nashef  
Assistant to the Director-General for Social  
and Human Sciences  
Paris

Ms. Siko Sujita  
Programmes Expert  
Beirut

#### International Labour Organization

Ms. Mary Del Skelenbouch  
Specialist Officer  
Beirut

#### United Nations Development Programme

Ms. Francis Gaye  
Gender team leader  
Regional Center in Amman, Regional Bureau  
for Arab States  
Amman

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Ms. Malika Martini  
Regional Advisor for Rural Development  
Regional Office for Near East and North Africa  
Cairo

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Ms. Shubu Jalal  
Gender adviser  
UNICEF  
Amman

C. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

League of Arab States

Ms. Inas Makawi  
Director of the Department of Women, Family and Children  
Cairo

Advisor  
Alexandria, Egypt

Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs

Ms. Mona Khnayser  
Research Assistant  
American University of Beirut

Lebanese American University

Ms. Maryam Sfeir  
Director Assistant  
Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World

Ms. Fatima Mousawi  
Researcher and project coordinator  
Beirut

Islamic Development Bank

Ms. May Ali Taher  
Director of Women's Affairs Department  
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

National Council for Child Welfare

Ms. Souad Abdullah  
Secretary-General and Supervisor of the Directorate-General for Women  
Cairo

Swedish Institute

Mr. Peter Widrod  
Director-General  
Alexandria, Egypt

Arab Institute for Human Rights

Ms. Nada Khalifah  
Member and lawyer  
Beirut

Ms. Randa Hafez

D. EXPERTS

Ms. Nata Dufoury  
Director of the Women's Studies Centre  
National University of Ireland Galway  
United Kingdom

Ms. Samar Sami Muhareb  
Arab Network for Democracy and Development  
Amman

Ms. Soumoud abu Saae  
Judge at the Office of the Chief Justice Supreme  
Council for the Islamic Courts of Palestine  
Ramallah

Annex II

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

Title	Item	Symbol
Information note		E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/INF.1
Provisional agenda and annotations	3	E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/L.1
Organization of work	3	E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/L.2
Progress made in the advancement of women in the Arab region	4	E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/3
Activities related to women advancement in the ESCWA programme of work, the Muscat Declaration on the Achievement of Gender Justice, and recommendations of the Committee on Women	4 (a)	E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/3(Part I)
Technical cooperation activities and advisory services	4 (b)	E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/3(Part II)
Actions taken by member States pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee on Women	4 (c)	E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/3(Part III) (Arabic only)
Sustainable Development Goal 5	5	E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/4
Gender equality indicators: data availability in Arab countries	5 (a)	E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/4(Part I)
Activities to support the Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals in 2016-2017	5 (b)	E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/4(Part II)
Enhancing the role of institutions in achieving gender equality in the Arab region	6	E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/5
Mainstreaming gender equality in public institutions	6 (a)	E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/5(Part I)
The role of institutions in times of peace and war	6 (b)	E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/5(Part II)
The economic cost of violence against women	6 (c)	E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/5(Part III)
Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 in the advancement of women	7	E/ESCWA/ECW/2017/IG.1/6