



Together for Justice
and Sustainable Development

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



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FOREWORD



“The world confirmed its faith in the ability of the United Nations and in its promise, even in times fraught with danger, to continue to work unflinchingly to deliver peace, equality, prosperity and dignity to all peoples.”

The year 2015 was remarkable for international development cooperation, the United Nations and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

The United Nations turned 70 in October 2015 and the world celebrated with it a long and fruitful journey: one of challenges and achievements, of uncertainty and unyielding commitment, of fear and determination, and ultimately of hope. The world confirmed its faith in the ability of the United Nations and in its promise, even in times fraught with danger, to continue to work unflinchingly to deliver peace, equality, prosperity and dignity to all peoples.

A renewed confidence in our capacity to work together to reach common solutions to our common problems has emerged. Three key global agreements were reached in 2015: the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (Action Agenda), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Paris Agreement). Those agreements, the fruit of major summits, will shape the development debate for years to come, including in Arab countries.

ESCWA has accompanied Arab countries during the implementation and reporting process of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and in the transitional process from them to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Progress on the SDGs will require tighter cooperation between member States. In 2015, Mauritania became the latest member of the Commission, marking an important step towards realizing the dream espoused by ESCWA of Arab integration. Another key event for ESCWA was the raising of the flag of Palestine as a non-member observer State at the United Nations. ESCWA will continue to support the rights of Palestinians and their quest for justice.

As the regional arm of the United Nations, ESCWA will continue to foster economic integration among its member States and to promote the implementation in the region of internationally agreed development goals. Aware of the difficulty of pursuing development and achieving justice in a fragmented and conflict-ridden region, we will continue to leverage our convening power in order to advance multilateral dialogue, knowledge-sharing and networking at the regional level. We reiterate our commitment to achieving the rights and aspirations of the peoples of the Arab region, who continue to inspire despite the obstacles they face, who continue to strive, day in and day out, against seemingly insurmountable odds, to maintain their faith, dignity and hope for a better future for their children.

Rima Khalaf

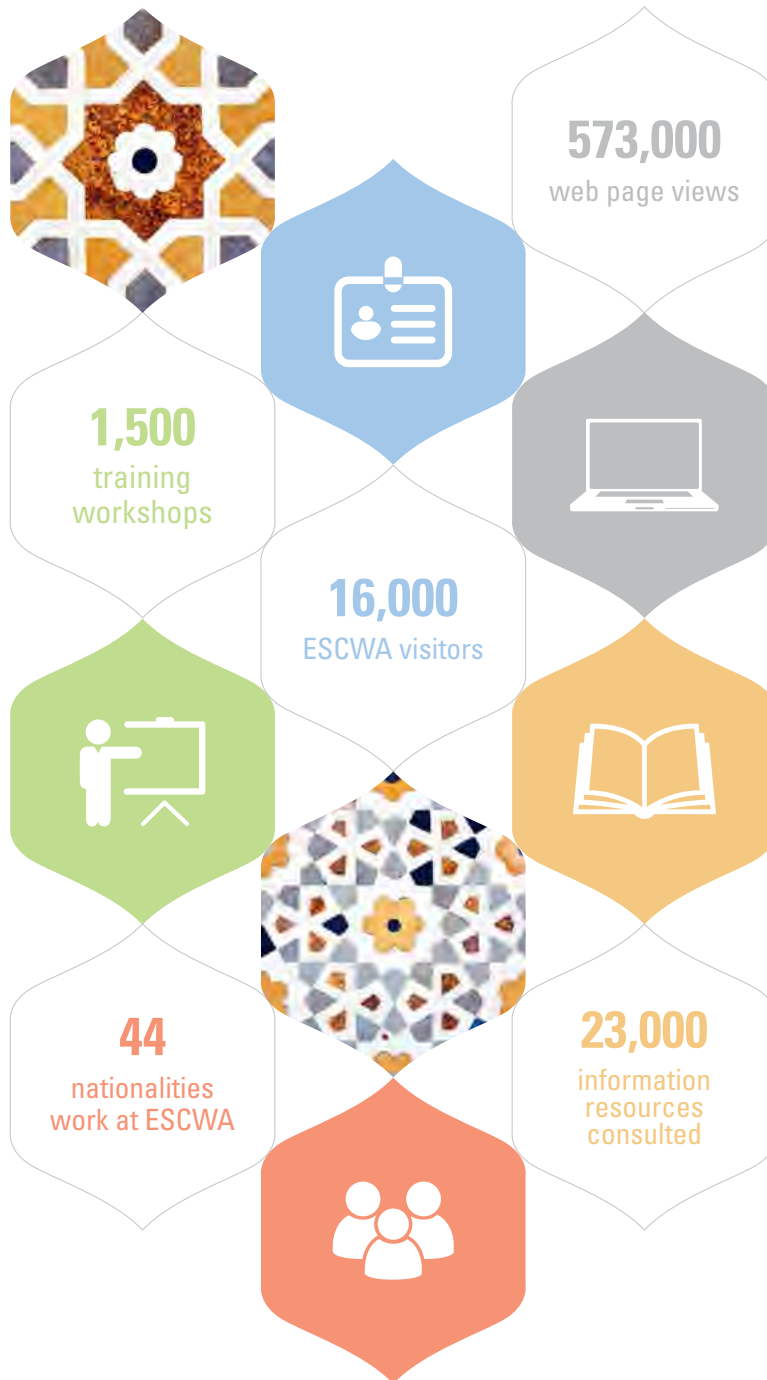
Under-Secretary-General
Executive Secretary

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ESCWA IN BRIEF

Economic and social well-being are prerequisites for the sustainable development of individuals, peoples and nations. ESCWA makes sure that the regional voice is heard within the United Nations and helps its member States to tackle global issues at home. The Regional Commission strives to make international development accessible to the citizens of the Arab region.



ESCWA is one of five United Nations regional commissions that were created to fulfil the economic and social goals set out in the United Nations Charter by promoting cooperation and integration among the countries in each region of the world.



VISION

ESCWA has a vision for a stable and prosperous Arab region, in which people enjoy freedom, equality, social justice and sustainable livelihoods.



FREEDOM



EQUALITY



JUSTICE



SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT



WHO WE ARE

With 18 member States, ESCWA represents most Arab countries. Together they account for 341 million people, or 4.6 per cent of the world's population. The Commission's headquarters are in Beirut but in the past it has also been based in Amman and Baghdad. It has an affiliate in Amman.



WHAT WE DO

ESCWA supports economic and social development in its member countries and encourages interaction among them. The Commission provides a forum for dialogue, a platform for cooperation and integration at the local, regional and global

levels, and a framework for policymaking by member States. A repository of expertise and knowledge, it also serves as an information observatory.



Research

ESCWA conducts research and produces studies and policy advice on all aspects of socioeconomic development. Knowledge is developed and shared with and for policymakers, civil society, experts and practitioners.



Advisory services

ESCWA offers technical and advisory services to member States and responds to requests to support national developmental efforts. ESCWA conducts training and provides specialized assistance to the development of norms and standards, and the set up and implementation of policies and mechanisms.



High-level meetings

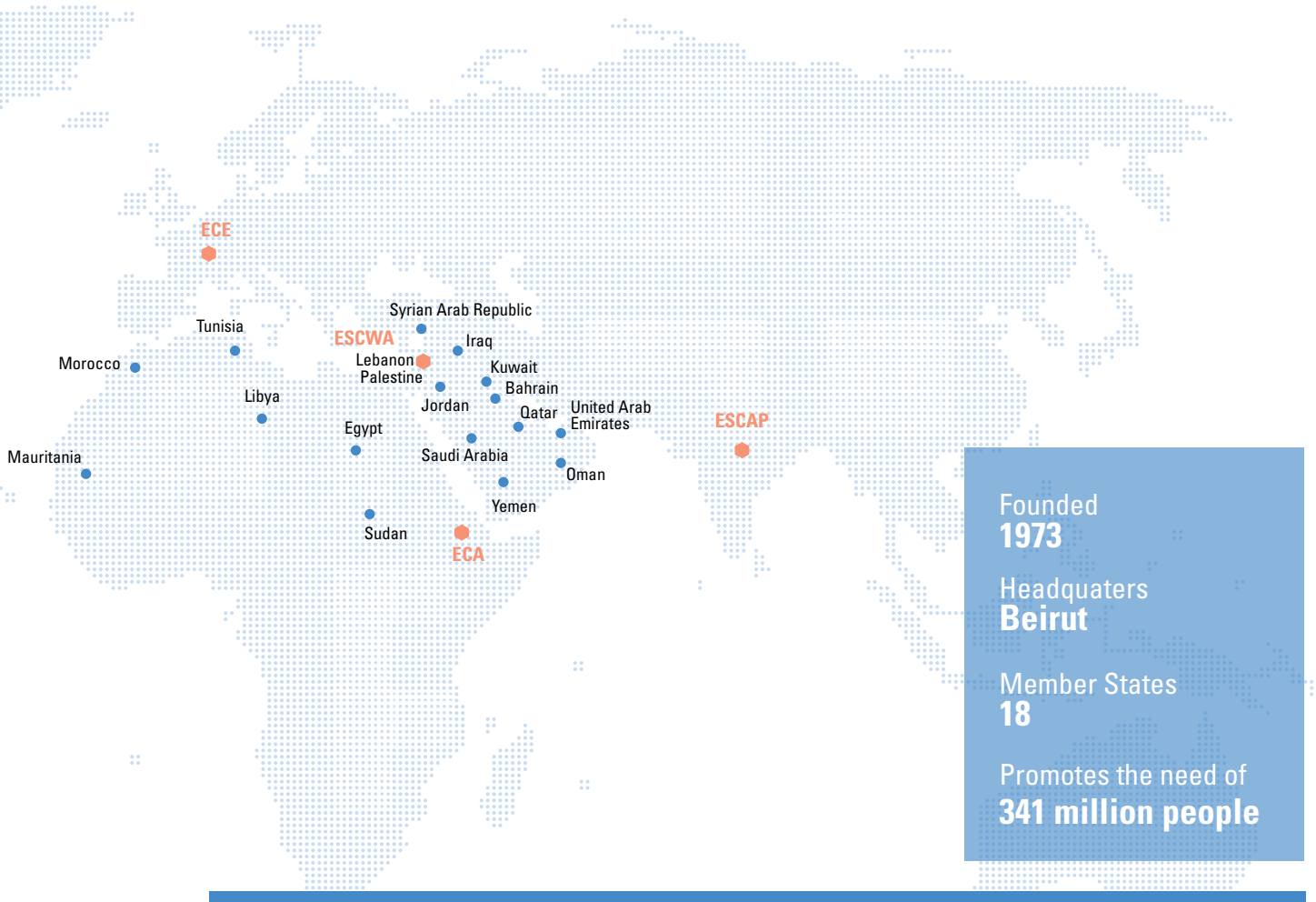
ESCWA organizes high-level conferences, intergovernmental meetings and capacity-building workshops to tackle socioeconomic issues. ESCWA also provides a regional forum for senior officials of member States to coordinate their positions at regional and international conferences and summits.



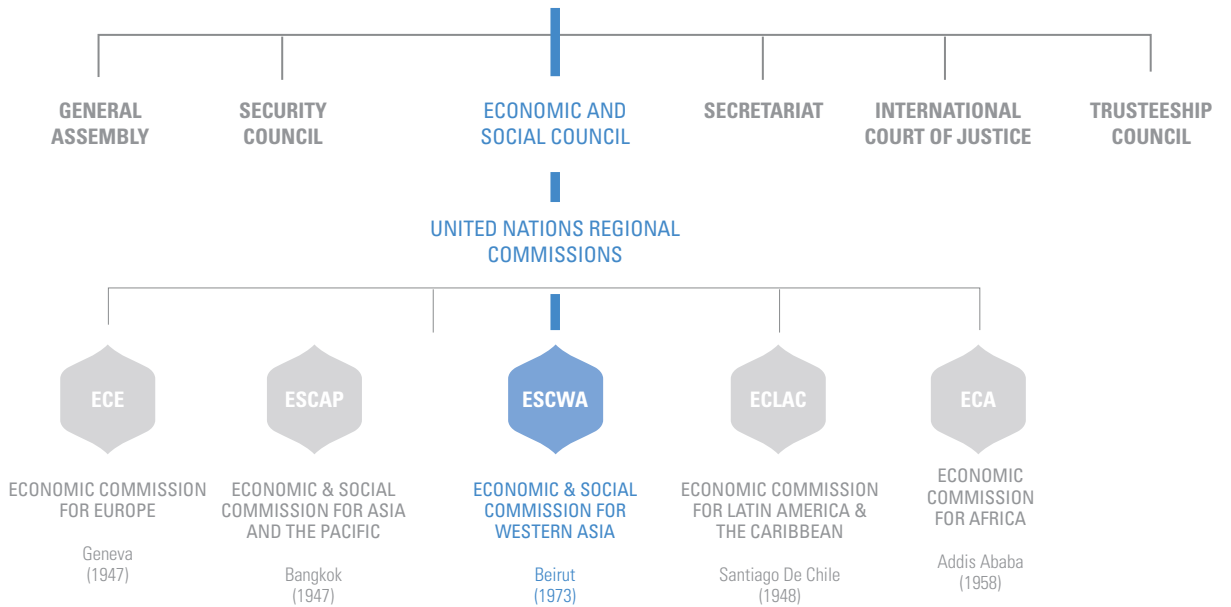
Partnerships & networks

ESCWA works in partnership with the League of Arab States and other Arab organizations, and in coordination with regional United Nations entities and country programmes. ESCWA also cultivates partnerships with civil society organizations and networks.

ECLAC



UNITED NATIONS





ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

The head of the Commission holds the position of Under-Secretary-General within the United Nations system. For one third of its existence, ESCWA has been led by a female Executive Secretary (currently Dr. Rima Khalaf). Former heads originated from Yemen, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Egypt, Qatar and Jordan.



DR. RIMA KHALAF
Executive Secretary



(VACANT)
Deputy Executive Secretary,
Programme Support

- Programme planning and technical cooperation



MR. ABDALLAH AL-DARDARI
Deputy Executive Secretary,
Programme

- Strategy, evaluation and partnerships



MR. KARIM KHALIL
Secretary of the Commission



MS. ROULA MAJDALANI
Sustainable Development Policies Division (SDPD)

- Energy
- Water
- Food and environment policies



MR. FREDERICO NETO
Social Development Division (SDD)

- Participation and social justice
- Population and social development
- Inclusive social development



MR. MOCTAR MOHAMED EL HACENE
Economic Development and Integration Division (EDID)

- Regional integration
- Economic development and poverty
- Economic governance and planning
- Modeling and forecasting



MR. HAIDAR FRAIHAT
Technology for Development Division (TDD)

- ICT policies
- Innovation
- ESCWA Technology Centre, Jordan



MR. JURAJ RIECAN
Statistics Division (SD)

- Demographic and social statistics
- Economic statistics



MS. MEHRINAZ EL AWADY (OIC)
ESCWA Centre for Women (ECW)

- Gender equality
- Women's empowerment



MR. TARIK ALAMI
Emerging and Conflict-related Issues Division (ECRI)

- Conflict, occupation and development
- Governance and state building



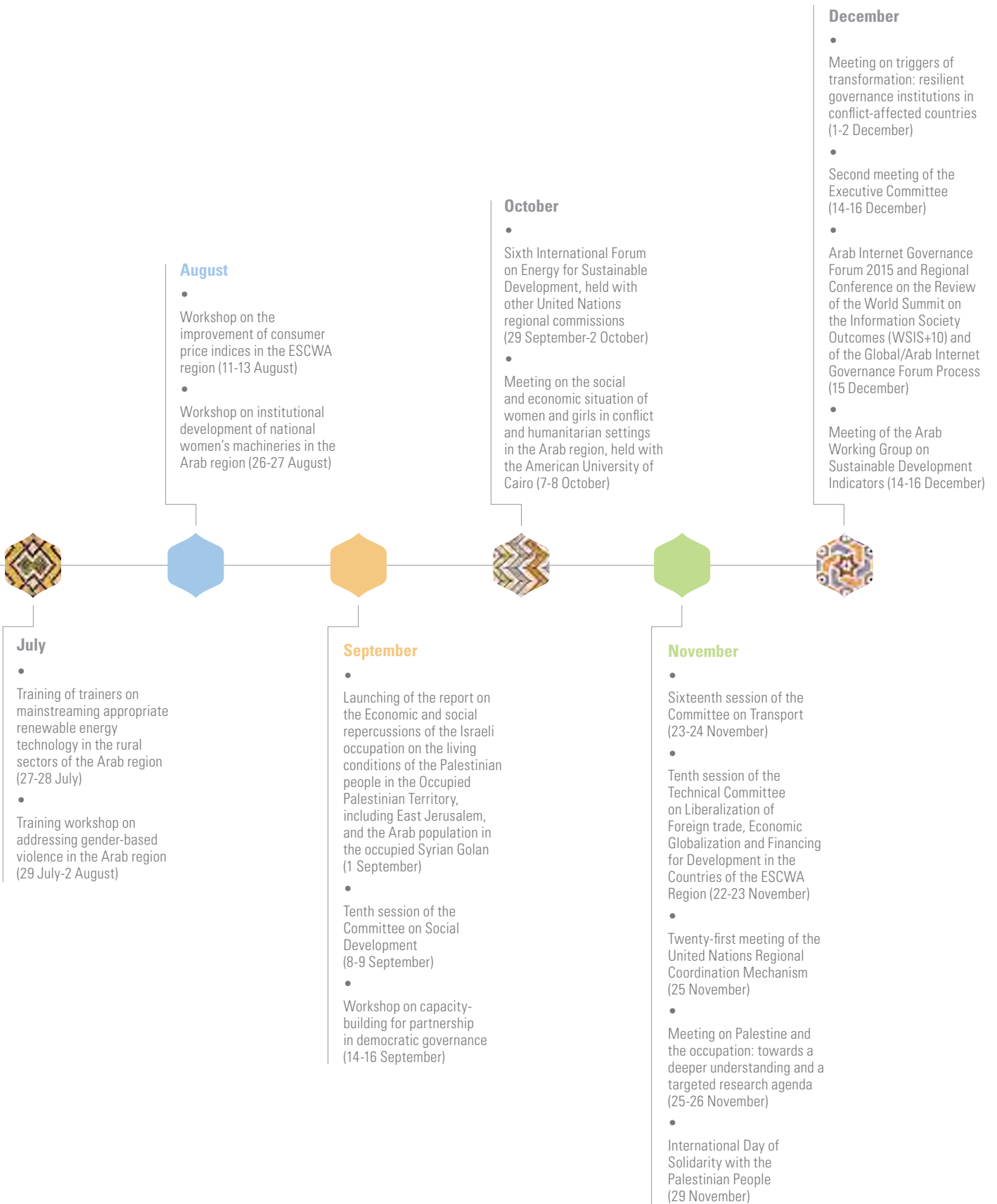
MR. PONTUS MOLIN
Administration Services Division (ASD)

- Budget and finance
- Human resources management
- General services
- Information and communications systems
- Conference services
- Joint medical services
- Procurement



YEAR IN REVIEW







ESCWA IN NUMBERS



Visitors/events

16,267

visitors to the United Nations House

1,459

participants who attended meetings at the United Nations House



Online presence

83,862

users who visited our website

573,144

ESCWA Web page views in 2015



Publications

22,752

library & information resources consulted in person, by email or via the library web page

21,780

downloads of our publications



371 staff members

44

nationalities

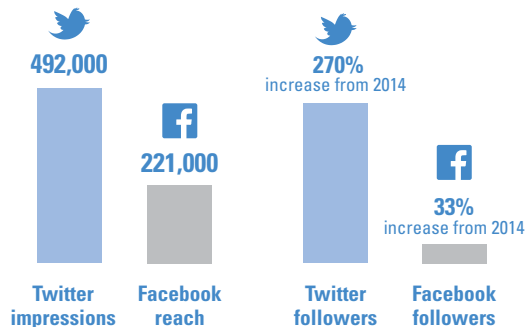
150 (40%)

women at ESCWA

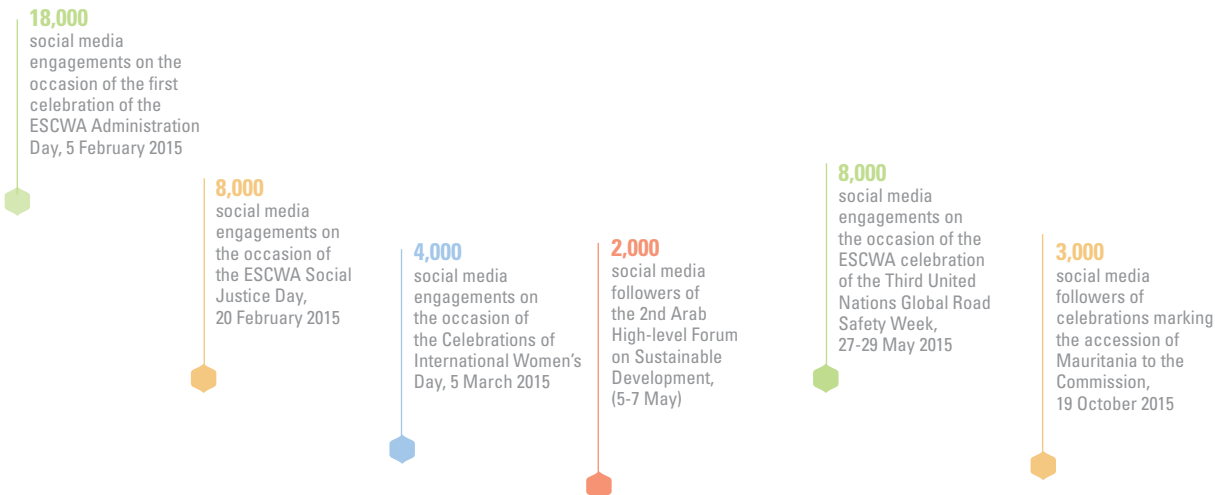


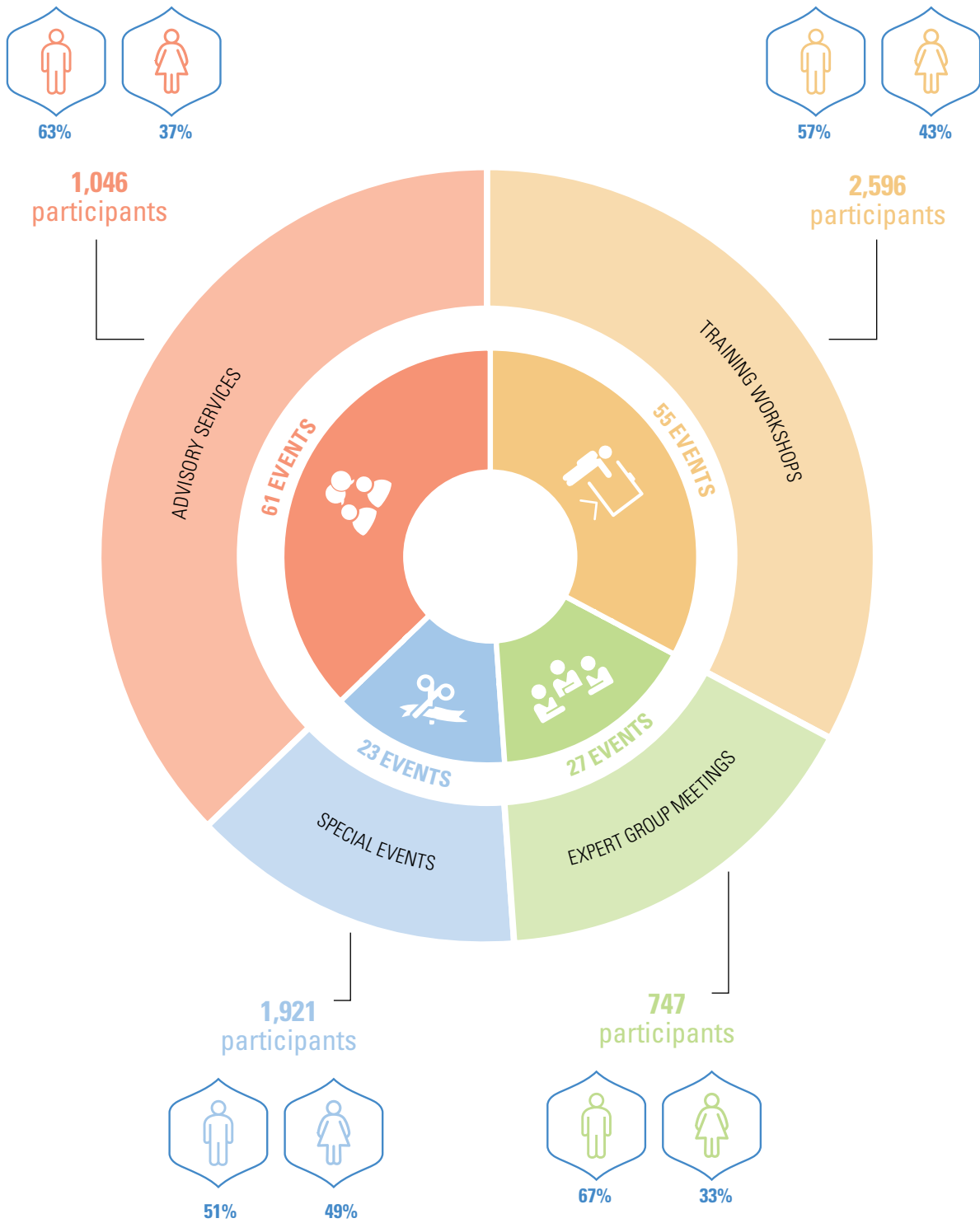
Media (ESCWA Communication and Information Unit)

The media arm of ESCWA works to raise awareness of the Commission's normative work and its impact on the lives of people in the region. Social media offers the opportunity to reach a broader audience and interact with users who provide more dynamic, real-time content.



SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS WITH SPECIAL EVENTS







FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2014-2015 (IN UNITED STATES DOLLARS)

COMPONENTS	ALLOTMENT
Policymaking Organs	145,600
Executive Direction & Management	3,883,100
Programme of Work	37,142,900
Programme Support	31,455,500
Business Continuity	362,800
Rio +20	734,900
Structural Remediation	262,100
Total Regular Budget (RB)	73,986,900
Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC)	5,360,600
Construction, Alterations and Improvements	4,116,400
Major Maintenance	570,200
Safety and Security (SSS)	12,908,900
Development Account	6,025,988
Extra Budgetary Resources	9,740,359
Programme Support Cost	1,217,510
TOTAL ESCWA BUDGET (ALL FUNDS)	113,926,857



HIGHLIGHTS

A WATERSHED YEAR IN GLOBAL COOPERATION

The year 2015 was marked by a renewed faith in the power of global cooperation to face common challenges. Key agreements will have far-reaching implications for development for many years to come.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, agreed upon by Governments between 13 and 16 July 2015 at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, sets forth bold measures for the reform of global financial practices and a framework for generating investment in sustainable development.

World leaders subsequently convened in New York from 25 to 27 September 2015 to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. The Agenda is the fruit of years of work and a broad consultative process involving national Governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, international organizations and beneficiaries. Envisioned as a “plan of action for people, planet and prosperity”, it comprises 17 ambitious goals and 169 targets for achieving equitable, inclusive and sustainable prosperity for all.

It charts the way forward in the critical areas of peace, poverty, health, gender equality, employment, climate change, sustainable natural resource management, social and economic development, participation and partnership.

In December, world leaders meeting in Paris at the twenty-first annual Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted the Paris Agreement on climate change. Under the agreement, countries committed themselves to nationally determined contributions and pledged to increase them over time. They also pledged to submit new plans every five years from 2018, in order to maintain focus of States parties on efforts to combat global warming. A committee of experts will help countries to implement the agreement.

ESCWA has supported member States in their efforts to implement commitments under global agreements such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Rio+20 and will continue to do so, just as it

will continue to ensure that their priorities are taken into account in global agendas.



FLAG OF PALESTINE FLIES AT THE UNITED NATIONS

On 10 September 2015, the General Assembly voted by an overwhelming majority (119-8) to raise the flags of non-member observer States, including ESCWA member State of Palestine, at United Nations Headquarters (in New York) and United Nations offices. The resolution constituted a historic gesture of solidarity with Palestine and sent a message of hope to the Palestinian community in its struggle to regain its rights from the occupying State of Israel, including the rights of return, self-determination and dignity. ESCWA continues to monitor the social and economic repercussions of the Israeli occupation and present its findings in an annual report to the General Assembly. It works with the State of Palestine on capacity-building and national planning in the areas of education, statistics, governance, resilience and justice.



MAURITANIA JOINS ESCWA

The ESCWA family grew to 18 member States with the decision of Mauritania to join in 2015. On 19 October 2015, the flag of Mauritania was raised at ESCWA headquarters in Beirut during a ceremony to mark the country's admission to the Commission. The accession of Mauritania is a step forward in the Commission's efforts to extend membership to cover the entire Arab region, which in turn will strengthen the capacity of ESCWA to support member States and respond to their development priorities, harmonize regional policies and promote regional integration.



TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD:



THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

REGIONAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2030 AGENDA

The second session of the Arab High-level Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by ESCWA and regional partners and held in Manama between 5 and 7 May, took stock of the global processes that lead to the formulation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and prepared for the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development that was held in late June and early July at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It resulted in the Bahrain Document, which contains recommendations for a comprehensive and transformative approach to sustainable development in the region in accordance with its own priorities.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The newly designated Executive Committee (under ESCWA resolution 320 (XXVIII)) of the Commission met twice in 2015 in Amman.

On 8 and 9 June, the Committee discussed: progress made by the secretariat in implementing the Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region; evaluation of the Commission's work; financing for development; preparations for the post-2015 development agenda; climate change talks; and follow-up on the implementation

of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after 20 years (Beijing+20) in the Arab region.

The second meeting, held between 14 and 16 December, focused on: the Commission's strategy and plan of action for implementing the 2030 Agenda; technological means of advancing the SDGs and regional indicators for them; terms of reference for the Commission's technical cooperation network; conflict and instability in the Arab region; and implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

NEW ESCWA WEBSITE

The ESCWA website got a facelift with the launch of its new look in 2015 (<https://www.unescwa.org>). The site, which is more in line with those of other Regional Commissions and offers easy to navigate, user-friendly links to important information for internal and external users, features content in Arabic and English. News and recent analysis sections provide gateways to ESCWA resources and insights by ESCWA experts on current issues. Access is also available to featured publications, projects, data, and statements and opinions from the Executive Secretary. As part of the push by ESCWA to become more proactive in social media, the website hosts a blog by the Deputy Executive Secretary.





United Nations House, Beirut



Umayyad Palace, Amman



Hazza Bin Zayed Stadium, Abu Dhabi



The Sphinx, Cairo



National Theatre of Tunisia, Tunis

THE UNITED NATIONS TURNS 70!

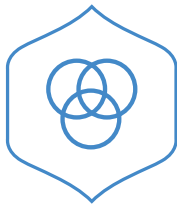
On United Nations Day in October, more than 350 landmarks in some 90 countries were lit up in blue, the organization's official colour, to mark the 70th anniversary of its founding.

Member States also participated.

umojja GOES LIVE!

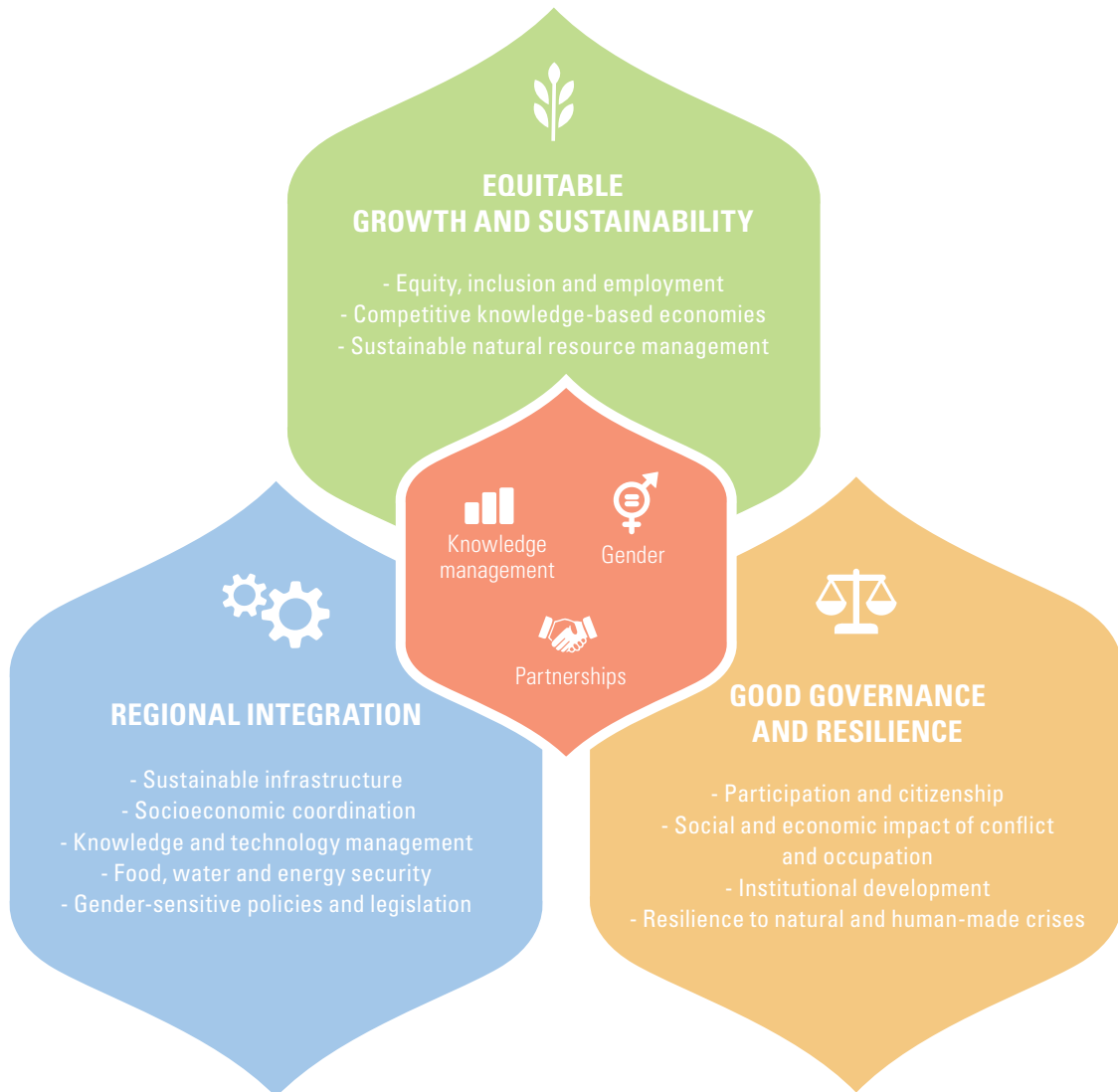
In November, ESCWA joined 70 United Nations Secretariat entities in rolling out an enterprise resource planning system (ERP) named Umoja. ESCWA will use the system, which supersedes old "legacy" systems, standalone spreadsheets and paper-based administrative processes, to manage its main business processes, including procurement, finance, logistics, human resources and asset management. The roll-out, which crowns a process of management reform across the Secretariat, took more than one year to prepare at ESCWA and involved a multidivisional team of more than 20 staff members. A total of 271 staff members

attended 20 instructor-led training activities in the course of the roll-out. The switch to Umoja, coupled with the transition in 2014 to the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), brings ESCWA to the cutting edge of modern business management methods. Multiple benefits are expected. Umoja allows staff members to focus on strategy, enhances budgetary and financial controls, improves efficiency, enables more timely and informed decisions and provides real-time data tracking. ESCWA will use these tools to become a regional centre of excellence and to share its expertise with a wide array of partners and stakeholders.



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The ESCWA Strategic Framework shapes the Commission's work and is composed of three main pillars, regional integration, equitable growth and sustainability, and good governance and resilience. They are further divided into 12 priority areas and three cross-cutting issues. Each pillar is presented as a chapter in this report.



REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Achieving sustainable development requires us to grow closer. Countries cannot solve infrastructure, trade, technology, economic and environment challenges without regional integration



Arab countries share history, language, culture and resources. Because they face common challenges, it is crucial to integrate economic and social policy in the interest of sustainable development. Through its work on regional integration, ESCWA seeks to harmonize policy responses and strengthen regional cooperation in key areas such as physical infrastructure; economic policy; data production and comparability; knowledge and technology management; water, energy and food security; and mainstreaming gender into development policy.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Sustainable infrastructure for development means knowledge production, technology transfer and reliable physical networks connecting Arab countries and facilitating resource-sharing and integration.

One key example of how ESCWA helps member States with infrastructure is its support for implementing components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM), pursuant to ESCWA resolution 279 (XXIV) of 11 May 2006, with the aim of facilitating trade and transport in the Mashreq. In 2015, ESCWA sought to have national coordinators for geographic information systems (GIS) put in place and to update agreements on the international roads, railways and maritime transport in order to include ESCWA member States from the Maghreb.

In 2015, ESCWA organized activities for the United Nations Third Global Road Safety Week at the United Nations House in Beirut from 27 to 29 May 2015. They included a regional workshop on road safety and the presentation of guidelines proposed by ESCWA for the creation/activation of elements of national road safety management systems, such as national lead agencies, national councils and technical committees on road safety. The activities served to prepare member States for the Second Global High-level Conference on Road Safety in Brasilia, which took place on 18 and 19 November 2015.

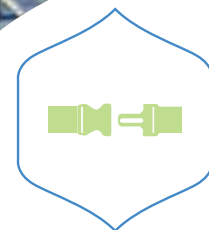
ECONOMIC POLICY

ESCWA encourages the process of economic cooperation and integration in the region. Given the dearth of progress on establishing an Arab customs union, ESCWA produced a study on the economic and fiscal implications of the establishment of the union under alternative scenarios. The League of Arab States endorsed the study and, at a

“ESCWA organized activities for the United Nations Third Global Road Safety Week at the United Nations House in Beirut from 27 to 29 May 2015.”



Facilitating trade and transport



Road safety

summit in Egypt in March 2015, urged Arab countries to prepare solid foundations for the union. A meeting between the League and the United Nations Economic and Social Council mandated ESCWA to cooperate with the League in assisting the latter's member States in defining their positions on the union and identifying how it can best be

launched. The years 2016 and 2017 will be a critical period on the road to adopting a final agreement.

In 2015, ESCWA published the first edition of *Assessing Arab Economic Integration: Towards the Arab Customs Union* (E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/4), which introduces a new quantitative system of indices to evaluate and monitor accurately economic integration within the region and with other regions (such as the European Union) across a variety of indicators, over time and in comparison with other countries and regions. It provides a road map for launching the Union and complements research and capacity-building work done by ESCWA in 2015 on the full implementation of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA) and launching the union.

In October, ESCWA drafted a chapter on the economic situation in the Arab region for the annual Project LINK meeting on the world economic outlook, coordinated by the Development Policy and Analysis Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the University of Toronto. The results of the meeting feed into the World Economic Situation and Prospects Report, produced by DESA.

“ESCWA published the first edition of *Assessing Arab Economic Integration Towards the Arab Customs Union*.”

COORDINATING DATA PRODUCTION AND COMPARABILITY

ESCWA encourages regional comparability of data and conformity to international standards, classifications and recommendations. National and regional price statistics projects continue to be implemented with a view to harmonizing price indices and national methodologies, and thereby enhancing regional comparability of price statistics. In the United Arab Emirates, for example, a programme developed for the regular production of subnational purchasing power parity (PPP) estimates and price level indices has been adopted by the National Bureau of Statistics in Abu Dhabi. The first results are expected in 2016 and will represent the first subnational PPPs produced in an Arab country.

ESCWA was the first regional commission to develop a methodology for producing annual PPP series. In 2015, the initiative won praise from the World Bank, which urged other regions to adopt the same price statistics methodology. The Commission continued to work through technical assistance missions and expert group meetings

ESCWA assists member States with negotiations on free trade agreements such as the *Accord de Libre-échange complet et approfondi* (ALECA), which Tunisia is discussing with the European Union and on which ESCWA conducted a technical advisory mission to Tunis in 2015. The Commission also provides advice on the role of global and regional integration in the economic transformation of member States, trade barriers and policies for boosting exports. In that context, ESCWA published *Trade Logistics in the Arab Region: Challenges and Policy Options* (E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/1), which looks at the relationship between efficient trade logistics and trade and economic performance.

ESCWA went to great lengths to ensure that the voice of the region was heard at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. It presented a paper on the Arab position regarding the conference at the ninth session of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the countries of the ESCWA Region, held in Amman on 7 and 8 April 2015. Discussions at that session focused on the impact of the economic crisis on developed economies and the fact that environmental considerations were commanding greater attention at the expense of the social and economic dimensions. It was pointed out that the paper did not cover Islamic financing, specify how development funds should be used or mention the role of developed countries in combating illicit capital flows and returning funds.



“ESCWA was the first Regional Commission to develop a methodology for producing annual PPP series.”

on implementing the System of National Accounts (2008) and developing short-term economic indicators, industrial, energy and environmental statistics, and internationally recommended economic classifications. One regional meeting looked at the compilation of financial sector accounts and development of business registers in different financial subsectors.

A pilot project was launched on short-term economic indicators (STEI) in seven Arab countries, with a view to assessing their capacity to produce core indicators for monitoring and evaluating economic performance. The Commission continued to strive to provide more timely, relevant and accessible data on national accounts, prices, trade, industry, energy, the environment, health, education, employment and population. The Commission's efforts helped to improve national data compilation and reduce discrepancies between

national and international data, thereby lifting the overall quality of reporting in Arab countries and enabling better policy planning. In the course of the year, ESCWA stepped up efforts to update its dissemination of statistical data. All data publications are available in various formats at the ESCWA Statistics ePublications Portal (www.escwa.org.lb/divisions/sd/pubs). Data are available on a broad range of themes and cover ESCWA member States. A growing number of data sets aim to cover all Arab countries.

MEASURING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY: A PROPOSED PAN-ARAB MULTIPURPOSE SURVEY

The lack of data on poverty and inequality in Arab countries makes it difficult to formulate meaningful policies on critical issues confronting the region. Countries use different poverty lines for measurement and research in the area is neither systematic nor consistent between countries. A radical methodological rethink is thus needed in order to produce better data through existing national surveys. This is especially important in the light of the SDGs. Combined indicators on income and living standards, health, education, employment and social protection would make it possible to construct better indices, including income and multidimensional poverty indices, by taking into account the specific characteristics of the Arab region. ESCWA publishes such data in its biennial Compendium of Social Statistics, the twelfth issue of which covers 2014-2015.

In 2015, ESCWA developed a tool for harmonized household survey modules called the Pan-Arab Multi-Purpose Survey (PAMPS), which was endorsed at an intergovernmental meeting on statistics in Arab countries in February (E/ESCWA/SD/2014/WP.1).

BETTER MEASUREMENT OF POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN ARAB COUNTRIES



COORDINATING KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

The success of regional integration depends greatly on comparable levels of digital and technology literacy. More needs to be done to narrow knowledge divides within countries and across the region to harness information and communications technologies (ICTs) more effectively. ESCWA is therefore working on a project to Establish National Technology Development and Transfer systems in selected ESCWA Member States, in order to enhance and

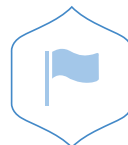
promote national innovation systems by updating related policies and setting up national technology transfer offices (NTTO). The offices will facilitate partnerships between local universities, research institutions, the industry, the public sector and civic society. The project brings together science and technology research councils from Egypt, Lebanon, Oman, Morocco and Tunisia, and will be extended to other Arab countries.

ACADEMY OF ICT ESSENTIALS FOR GOVERNMENT LEADERS IN THE ESCWA REGION (AIGLE)

In 2015, ESCWA also continued the implementation of the “Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders in the ESCWA Region” (AIGLE). This three-year project was launched in 2013 and funded by the United Nations Development Account for capacity development. The four training modules are in Arabic and aim to build the capacities of government officials and leaders in the following areas: links between ICT and development; ICT for development policies: main elements and tools for management; e-government policies, strategies and tools for applications; and Internet governance. For more information (in Arabic) see <http://escwa-aigle.org>.

ESCWA has provided eight advisory services to four countries (Morocco, Oman, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic), developed an online platform, and trained around 105 participants, including 88 trainers, in 14 member States (Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates). Roll-out of the project in several member States is under way: national training plans for 10 Arab countries were developed for 2015-2016 and several institutions have included the training modules in their curriculums. It is envisaged that 6,000 public sector leaders will be trained as a result. The modules have been updated periodically with case studies

and experiences from the Arab region. The future prospects of the academy were examined at a regional workshop in Beirut on 21 and 22 December 2015.



14
member States



8 advisory
services



Online
platform



Trained 105
participants



“The ICT Academy is one of the most important initiatives of ESCWA. It has a major impact on building the capabilities of public sector leaders in the Arab region and enhancing the understanding and recognition of the difference that technology makes in the development process of the various sectors of the economy. We in Oman recognize the importance of this initiative and were able to train 150 people from various government agencies through several monthly training courses. Work is now underway on developing the national training plan for the next stage of 2016, which is expected to target different segments of the public sector.”

Sultan Alwadhahi, eTransformation Director, E-Services Division, Information Technology Authority, Oman.

WATER, ENERGY AND FOOD SECURITY POLICIES

Efforts to decouple economic growth from unsustainable production and consumption patterns and harmonize food, water, energy and environmental strategies need to be redoubled.

ESCWA support for Arab States in regional preparations for the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs found expression in the First Report of the MDG+ Initiative under the auspices of the Arab Ministerial Water Council and in partnership with the League of Arab States and the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA). The report provides data from national monitoring teams in Arab States on access to water supply and sanitation services based on a set of region-specific indicators endorsed by the Water Council. The indicators measure access to and management of water services in terms of affordability, intermittency, water quality, wastewater treatment and reuse.

Two regional workshops and four national workshops in Morocco (June), Lebanon (July) and Mauritania and the Sudan (September) were held in 2015 to train national monitoring teams on the collection, calculation and validation of national datasets on region-specific water and sanitation indicators. Training manuals, a unified indicators template and a software tool to support the consolidation of information from water utilities into a unified national dataset were used at the workshops.

Consumer field surveys were conducted in eight Arab countries (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Palestine, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen) in cooperation with the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED). Twinning activities in October and November 2015 allowed country representatives from Iraq, the Sudan and Yemen to shadow counterparts in Jordan and benefit from the Jordanian experience in preparing the MDG+ Initiative datasets. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency provides funds for the MDG+ Initiative.

The Arab Ministerial Council of Electricity (AMCE) and the Arab Ministerial Water Council have asked ESCWA to support the implementation of a regional initiative on the water-energy-food nexus. ESCWA has responded with a new project, "Promoting food and water security through cooperation and capacity development in the Arab region", funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The launch

phase was completed in 2015. With an eye also on achieving the SDGs, ESCWA is preparing training modules for water and energy officials under a United Nations Development Account project.

The ESCWA study Pathways towards Food Security in the Arab Region: An Assessment of Wheat Availability (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/1) examines the prospects for increasing the supply of wheat in the region, assesses current production capacity and potential limits in terms of land and water availability and looks at the economic effect of maintaining wheat imports. The study concludes that coordinated policies could make the region largely wheat secure.



HARMONIZING GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Many Arab countries have benefited from assistance from ESCWA in amending their constitutions and legal systems to include provisions on gender equality and non-discrimination at the economic, social and political levels. In 2015, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia passed legislation to combat domestic violence and on protection from physical, psychological and sexual harm respectively. ESCWA provided advisory services to the Sudan on strategies for women's empowerment and family development and, in May, held a workshop in Lebanon on enhancing women's political participation through gender-sensitive electoral laws and quota systems. Following the lead of Iraq in 2014, Palestine endorsed a national action plan in 2015 to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. As a result of the efforts of ESCWA, the Sudan expressed an interest in adopting a national strategy to the resolution.

In February 2015, ESCWA joined UN-Women and the League of Arab States in holding a two-day high-level conference in Cairo with the theme "Towards Justice and Equality for Women in the Arab Region". Participants looked at how countries in the region can translate the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action into national legislation. The ensuing Arab Declaration Towards

Justice and Equality for Women in the Arab Region was the first such agreement to be adopted by the Arab States. It reaffirms their commitment to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and to fulfil its objectives using a human rights-based approach. Almost one year later, ESCWA released a study on the subject, *Against Wind and Tides: A Review of the Status of Women and Gender Equality in the Arab Region (Beijing +20)* (E/ESCWA/ECW/2015/3). ESCWA also provided technical support to the League of Arab States to develop a strategic framework and plan of action for implementing the declaration in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

In the run up to negotiations on the 2030 Agenda, ESCWA issued background papers on the role of national women's machineries in implementing and monitoring the SDGs in conjunction with the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Beijing Declaration.

ESCWA increased its focus on civil registration and vital statistics and continues to work to enhance the capacity of Arab countries to produce population and housing censuses and weave gender considerations into their statistics.

EQUITABLE GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Widely and fairly distributed economic growth is the key to sustainable living. Social progress means taking into account all members of society and acting in the interest of future generations.



This strategic pillar of ESCWA focuses on ensuring development is not only sustainable but inclusive and just. Growth should provide equal opportunities and returns in order to improve people's livelihoods in member States. It should also embrace and develop new technologies and competitive practices. Equity and inclusion, building knowledge-based economies and managing natural resources sustainably are thus the focus of the Commission's work under this pillar.

EQUITABLE GROWTH: EQUITY, INCLUSION AND EMPLOYMENT

Social protection is a key to achieving equality and inclusion. Several countries are reforming their national systems, most notably by phasing out energy subsidies and working to cover vulnerable groups better. In 2015, ESCWA assisted those countries through research, technical advice and the sharing of experiences. Research focused on social inclusion issues. The Report on Inclusive Social Development (E/ESCWA/SDD/2015/2) highlights progress in some areas across the region. The Social Development Bulletin: Social Protection as a Tool for Justice (vol. 5, No. 2, E/ESCWA/SDD) examines the mutually reinforcing relationship between social protection and social justice.

ESCWA is mapping and analysing social protection programmes in Member States. In 2015, country profiles on Oman and the United Arab Emirates, which look at social services challenges in those countries, were produced. A workshop on participatory-based social protection policy was held in Beirut.

Inclusive cities and affordable housing constitute an important new area of focus. ESCWA has partnered with UN Habitat to lead preparation in the region for the Habitat III conference (<https://www.habitat3.org>), which is due to take place in October 2016. A regional report on key urban issues in the region is being prepared for submission at the global conference.

ESCWA continues to promote the inclusion and rights of persons with disabilities. In 2015, ESCWA chaired the global Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG) for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a network of more than 30 United Nations agencies promoting the implementation of the Convention. ESCWA represented the IASG at the annual conference of States parties to the Convention and coordinated a number of joint activities, including a side event on persons with disabilities in humanitarian crises. In the course of the year, ESCWA conducted research on the capacities and role of civil society in disability policymaking and started a capacity-building project in Morocco to develop tools to implement the Convention.

Against a backdrop of rapidly changing population dynamics, characterized by the youth bulge, large migration flows and unprecedented forced displacement of people, ESCWA supported Arab National Population Councils in setting priorities and rolling out programmatic responses through integrated development policies. Consequently, ESCWA, in partnership with League of Arab States and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), has led the efforts to integrate the regional population priorities into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This process culminated in a meeting on the side of the forty-eighth Commission on Population and Development in



“ESCWA provided leadership and strategic direction to the work of the [Inter-Agency Support] Group, in particular, by bringing a regional perspective and focus to its work, and by leading collaborative activities to advance disability-inclusive responses in conflict and humanitarian crises.”

Miranda Fajerman, Associate Social Affairs Officer, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

New York in April 2015 to inform the Arab negotiators on regional population priorities, means to better integrate them in the 2030 Agenda and the way forward for their implementation in the light of the ongoing global discussion on indicators.

ESCWA also produced, jointly with the International Organization for Migration and other agencies, the 2015

Situation Report on International Migration: Migration, Displacement and Development in a Changing Arab Region, (E/ESCWA/SDD/2015/1), which constituted a landmark against the backdrop of population challenges. The report stresses the need for a rights-based approach to migration and a development-oriented response to protracted refugee and displaced population movements.

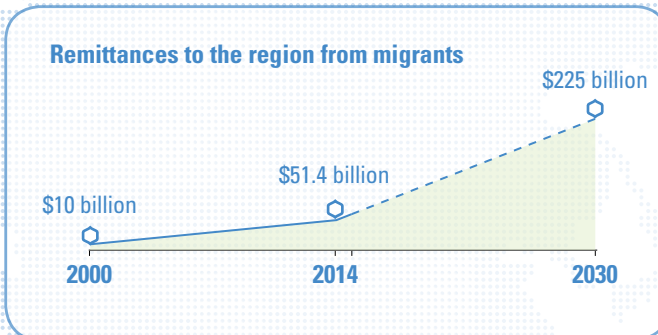
THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF MIGRATION

Remittances to the region from migrants have risen steadily from \$10 billion in 2000 to \$51.4 billion in 2014. The Arab region accounts for 12 per cent of remittances to developing countries. With a migrant population estimated at 22 million, however, \$225 billion more could be generated for development financing between now and 2030 by reducing the cost of making remittances, lowering recruitment fees for low-skilled migrant workers and mobilizing diaspora savings and philanthropic contributions.

ESCWA conducted 10 studies in 2014-2015 on how to maximize the impact of remittances on financing for development. By the second half of 2015, ESCWA had conducted six workshops and a regional seminar on the subject for 243 government officials and bankers in the region, helped Lebanon and the Sudan to set up national policy coordination committees to enhance the impact of remittances on development, and assisted the Ministry of Finance in the Sudan with legislation to obviate exchange rate problems hampering the transmission of remittances.



22 MILLION
MIGRANTS



ESCWA



1 regional seminar



6 workshops



10 studies



243 government officials & bankers



national policy coordination committee

COMPETITIVE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH: SUPPORTING NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

ESCWA helps member States to assess their economic situation and formulate policy accordingly. In 2015, it continued assistance to the Ministry of Economy and Planning in Saudi Arabia to implement and evaluate their ninth and tenth National Development Plans. It helped to identify key performance indicators related to 70 government institutions in the tenth plan and developed

a computable general equilibrium (CGE) model interface to address economic and social challenges, and a media coverage strategy. ESCWA also assisted the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan in assessing that country's economy and helped to design a CGE model for simulating economic scenarios based on key policy levers.



“ESCWA manages high-level, rich and well organized expert meetings on subjects relevant to the development of the knowledge society in the Arab region. Each meeting usually ends with a set of valuable and realistic recommendations that can support the advancement of Arab countries.”

Mohamed Ben Amor, Special Advisor to the Minister in Charge of International Cooperation, Ministry of Communication Technologies and Digital Economy, Tunisia.

ESCWA promotes innovation as a key enabler of economic growth. On 3 and 4 June 2015, it hosted an expert group meeting to explore how science, technology and innovation can be harnessed as an engine of growth. Participants made recommendations regarding innovation policy, regional integration, measuring innovation, research and development, and the role of the private sector. They also stressed the need to study national innovation systems. ESCWA took a leading role in launching the Innovation Scoreboard for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and member States agreed on 25 indicators to be used to assess innovation capacity and systems in the participating countries. Ultimately the project will standardize criteria and

procedures and ensure a common methodology for measuring and analysing innovation capacities in each country.

In 2015, ESCWA organized a session on the role of research, development and innovation in creating digital content at the Third Annual Digital Arabic Content Forum (held in Dubai on 19 and 20 October). The forum was organized in conjunction with the Arab Regional Office of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU-ARO), the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Egypt, and the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of the United Arab Emirates under the auspices of the League of Arab States.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Achievement of the 2030 Agenda will require coordination and efforts to decouple economic growth from unsustainable production and consumption patterns.

ESCWA supports efforts to encourage fuel efficiency and the reduction of CO₂ emissions by providing data on energy use. Around the world, transport accounts for 19 per cent of total end use. The average in ESCWA countries is twice that. A study conducted by ESCWA in 2015 in Egypt (31 per cent), Jordan (46 per cent) and Palestine (36 per cent) confirmed the tendency. Using methodology developed by the Commission and funded

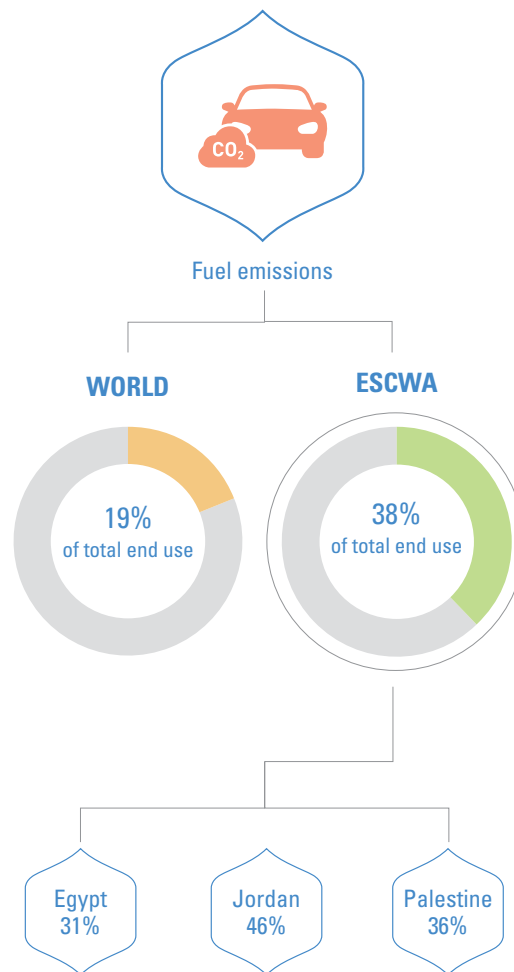
by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the study was conducted in partnership with national statistical offices and the transport and energy ministries in those countries.

ESCWA believes that greater regional integration is crucial to enhancing energy security. It outlined challenges facing the region in a report released in December 2015, Analysis of Energy Policy Trends in the Arab Region (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/5). The Commission's advocacy work on energy and sustainable development

found expression in a workshop on “Energy Security & Regional Cooperation in the Arab Region,” held on 10 September during the International Beirut Energy Forum for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in Lebanon and in publications such as Regional Cooperation and Energy Security in the Arab Region (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/4, Arabic only). In its reports, ESCWA has shed light on the repercussions of falling oil prices on sustainable development, the need for improved energy access in rural areas, the adoption of energy efficiency measures and the importance of renewable energy sources, as well as providing energy solutions to countries in conflict.

Other activities included a study tour in India for policymakers from six Arab countries to learn about the promotion of renewable energy technologies in rural areas, the Fifth Regional Workshop on the Draft Legal Framework for Shared Water Resources in the Arab Region, which was held in Cairo on 28 and 29 April, and intergovernmental expert discussions on 23 May 2015 on a draft convention on shared water resources in the Arab region.

Two key ESCWA publications that appeared in 2015, the ESCWA Water Development Report 6: The Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus in the Arab Region (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/2) and Population and Development Report Issue No. 7: Overcoming Population Vulnerability to Water Scarcity in the Arab Region (E/ESCWA/SDD/2015/4), address the sustainable management of scarce water resources.



“After goals are finalized, Governments will need to move quickly to developing country action plans. To date, the most extensive research and analysis on the region’s progress towards goals has been led by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The knowledge that exists outside of this process is largely siloed in nature and there is insufficient evidence about the cross-sectorial nature of development challenges.”

West Asia and North Africa Institute (WANA) in its newsletter on “The Environmental Sustainable Development Goals in the WANA Region”, at the time of the second session of the Arab High-level Forum on Sustainable Development (Manama, 5-7 May 2015).

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND RESILIENCE

“Better standards of life in greater freedom” require more than the absence of war. ESCWA helps to develop government institutions that can offer a life worth living – and speaks out against the impact of occupation and human-caused disasters.



Conflicts in the region are undoing decades of progress and diverting much needed resources away from development. Rebuilding of physical, social and institutional infrastructure represents a major challenge. In the context of good governance and resilience, ESCWA is concentrating on four priority areas: participation and citizenship, the socioeconomic impact of conflict and occupation, institutional development, and resilience to natural and human-made crises.

PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Instability and conflict have seriously hampered efforts to guarantee full citizenship and the enjoyment of rights for all in the Arab region. Nonetheless, building on the regional consensus that social justice is a key development outcome, ESCWA has worked closely with government and non-government actors to develop guiding principles for inclusive and participatory policymaking.

Consultations organized by ESCWA in April 2015 allowed Arab civil society representatives to put forward recommendations on the 2030 Agenda, and at the tenth session of the Committee on Social Development, member

States agreed on the importance of genuine and active broad-based participation of citizens in generating more effective public policies, fairer social outcomes and more cohesive societies.

In its report *What is Left of the Spring? The Long Road to Social Justice in the Arab Region* (E/ESCWA/SDD/2015/3, Arabic only), ESCWA looks at the extent to which recent legal and policy reforms in the region have fostered the participation of citizens in economic, social and political life, and makes recommendations on how to overcome remaining obstacles to social justice.

ESCWA marked the World Day of Social Justice on 20 February with an awareness-raising event at the United Nations House in Beirut, with the participation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) and the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs. With a cultural programme, music, a documentary and a graffiti exhibition by young Arab artists, the event attracted more than 200

participants, including high-level officials from ESCWA member and non-member States, civil society organizations and think tanks, and experts in the social, economic, political, health, humanitarian and environmental fields. It provided a fresh impulse for member States to pursue efforts to eradicate poverty, promote full employment and decent work, and tackle the issues of gender equality, social well-being and access to justice for all.

In Iraq, a pilot National Committee of Practice on Participatory Development and Public Policy Processes was launched in Baghdad on 4 October 2015. The Committee, the members of which include government, academic and civil society representatives, will foster public-civic participation based on ESCWA models and programmes. It has already spread public awareness of the importance of encouraging broad participation in development processes through community and national workshops and activities on leadership, participatory public policymaking, transparency and accountability, reform, networking, building trust and consensus, and dialogue. ESCWA has developed a training toolkit on public-civic partnership in democratic governance, which demonstrates how to replicate some of the Committee's initiatives.



SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CONFLICT AND OCCUPATION

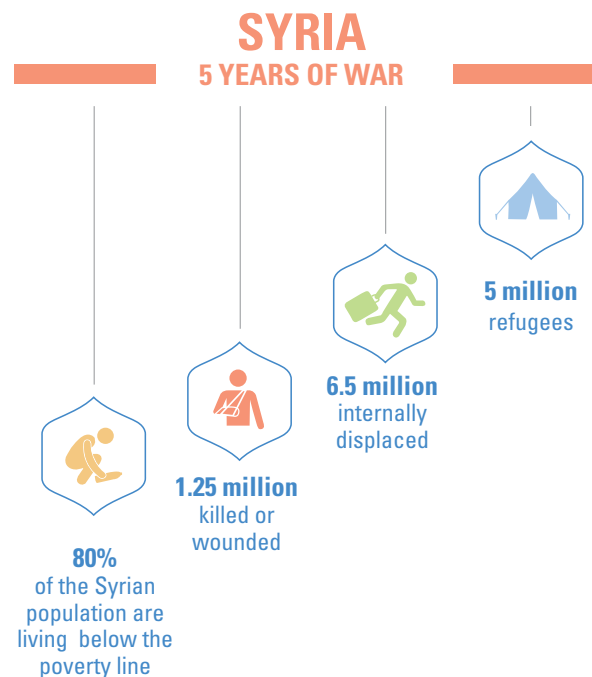
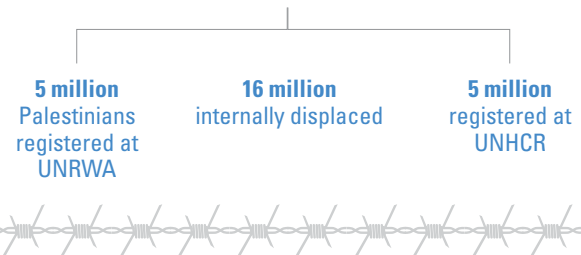
Conflicts in the region have resulted in catastrophic loss of life, severe disruption of livelihoods and displacement of more than 26 million people (including more than 16 million internally displaced persons, more than 5 million Palestinian refugees assisted under the mandate of the Office of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees of the Near East (UNRWA) and 5 million refugees fleeing the region registered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Conflict has compromised the ability of people to lead a dignified life, undermined opportunities for sustainable development, eroded institutions and shattered social cohesion and the rule of law.

After five years of war and more than a quarter of a million deaths in the Syrian Arab Republic, decades of advances in terms of education, health, nutrition and livelihood indicators have been partially or completely lost. Research by ESCWA has focused on the short- and long-term impact of conflict on development in areas such as income, education, health, governance, unemployment, access to water and sanitation, and women's opportunities for economic participation. In Trends and Impacts Issue No. 4: Protracted Conflict and Development in the Arab Region (E/ESCWA/ECRI/2015/2) a quantitative model, using a wide range of indicators, was employed to assess the cost of conflict and its impact on human development. Some of the research was done in partnership with experts from the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO).

The Commission's analytical work in 2015 focused on the special vulnerabilities of conflict-affected least developed countries (LDCs) in the Arab region, and monitored progress on the Istanbul Programme of Action for the past four years, including the compounded impact of external stresses, such as oil price volatility, climate change and spillover from conflicts in neighbouring countries. National strategies designed to cope with such external stresses require support from the international community. To that end, ESCWA has worked consistently at the global level to advocate for the special needs of Arab LDCs.



26 million displaced



"I attended a two-day workshop at ESCWA entitled "Governance and Institutional Transformations in Conflict-Affected Arab Countries". Substantive and spirited presentations and discussions by two dozen experts from many countries and sectors analysed why there is so much tension, violence and State fragmentation across Arab lands, and what can be done in future to rebuild stable governance systems. ESCWA is respected for arranging useful gatherings like this one, anchored in thoughtful and substantive background papers, and resulting in very pertinent synthesis reports and recommendations."

Rami Khouri, Senior Policy Fellow of Issam Fares Institute, American University of Beirut (AUB).

ESCWA established key partnerships to this end through the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on LDCs, provided recommendations to the annual Secretary-General's report and advocated for the special needs of Arab LDCs at the global level. Looking back at four years of implementation, an ESCWA study (E/ESCWA/ECRI/2015/WP.2) analyses progress and challenges met in LDCs in the region, Yemen and the Sudan with a strong focus on the special vulnerabilities these countries are experiencing due to conflict and political instability.

In the area of protection of women in situations of conflict, ESCWA was involved in a series of research projects and expert group meetings in 2015, focusing in particular on the social and economic situation of Palestinian women

and girls. ESCWA provided member States with a training manual on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 and conducted awareness-raising activities on the matter for government officials, religious leaders and media professionals.

ESCWA is working with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) to develop a statistical household survey on the socioeconomic impact of the 2014 Israeli military campaign in the Gaza Strip. In 2015, ESCWA provided technical support for the survey design and methodology and questionnaire contents. The survey, which will be conducted annually, is aimed at the Palestinian authorities, and donor and development actors. It will be instrumental in supporting research and macroeconomic simulations.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Weak institutions and a lack of accountability have left vast swathes of Arab society marginalized for decades. Rising poverty, widening income inequality, high unemployment, especially among youth and women, and limited political representation have all contributed to political polarization in many Arab countries. Despite a common perception that much of the unrest in the region is driven by disgruntled youth, research by ESCWA suggests that is not the case. Those findings appeared in 2015 in Trends and Impacts in Conflict Settings Issue No. 3: Political Polarization or Common Ground? (E/ESCWA/ECRI/2015/1).

ESCWA led discussion on open, citizen-centred government services with a public sector innovation workshop, held in Hammamat, Tunisia, on 17 November, and an expert group meeting on the knowledge-based economy, held in Amman on 3 and 4 June.

Under the umbrella of the Arab Internet Governance Forum (Arab IGF), ESCWA held a series of meetings and consultations in 2015 on Internet governance and the Internet economy for sustainable development. Participants at the fourth annual meeting of the Arab IGF, held in Beirut on 17 and 18 December, discussed international public policy on the Internet; cyber security; access and infrastructure; and the human and social dimensions of the Internet. The AIGF2020 Initiative, which aims to develop the Arab IGF process in its second mandate, was also launched. Cybersafety has been a central concern of the Commission, which published Policy Recommendations on Cybersafety and Combating Cybercrime in the Arab Region (E/ESCWA/TDD/2015/1, Arabic only) and a summary in English (E/ESCWA/TDD/2015/1/SUMMARY) and helped Oman to draft legislation on personal data protection.

RESILIENCE TO NATURAL AND HUMAN-MADE CRISES

The scourges of conflict and instability in the region have spurred ESCWA to redouble its efforts to help member States to build resilience through strong and accountable institutions, effective humanitarian response, sound social and economic policy and long-term development strategies.

ESCWA supported Arab States to prepare for global negotiations on climate change through its collaboration with the League of Arab States on a series of regional workshops that were organized in May and November 2015 to enhance the capacity of Arab climate change negotiators and support the preparation of consensus positions for



the Arab region in the UNFCCC COP 21 negotiations. These workshops are organized twice a year at the request of Arab member States to enhance the capacity of negotiators and to support consultation on regional issues and positions of concern.

ESCWA convened two side events at the COP 21 negotiations in Paris in late 2015, in the course of which the United Nations Regional Commissions and other bodies joined the Global Green Growth Institute in launching the Inclusive Green Growth Partnership.

At the side event on climate change impact and vulnerability assessments in the Arab region, jointly convened by ESCWA, the League of Arab States, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and the delegations of Jordan, Oman and Saudi Arabia, the results of regional and country-level work on climate change assessment and disaster risk reduction were presented.

ESCWA continues to assess the impact of climate change and extreme weather events on the Arab region within the framework of the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and

Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR). RICCAR produced a booklet on Climate Projections and Extreme Climate Indices for the Arab Region (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/Booklet.2) in 2015. ESCWA and its partners in the Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region (ACCWaM) project also produced a Training Manual on Integrated Vulnerability Assessment Methodology (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/Manual.1) for member States.

ESCWA supports coordinated responses to development challenges caused by human-induced crises by producing innovative research on regional policy coordination, such as its Arab Development Outlook: Vision 2030 (E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/3), which looks at various possible development scenarios for the coming years.

Participants at an expert group meeting on protracted conflict dynamics and resilience in the Arab region, held on 21 and 22 May 2015 in Amman by ESCWA and the WANA Institute, urged policymakers to prioritize basic service delivery and create employment and training opportunities for refugees, returnees and young people. The two bodies are working to transform the recommendations into a resilience programme for host communities and refugees.



PARTNERSHIPS

Regional dialogue preceding the launch of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs was a key focus for ESCWA and its partners in 2015. A defining characteristic of the SDGs is their interconnected nature, meaning that partnerships across sectors and national borders will be crucial for achieving them.

The partnership strategy of ESCWA is based on targeted cooperation with one or more actors in the interests of furthering regional development. It may work with a variety of partners at different stages of planning and implementation of any given project. In so doing, ESCWA aims to ensure as comprehensive an approach to development issues as possible. The following illustrates the importance to ESCWA of partnering with different types of organizations.



GOVERNMENTAL PARTNERS

With the backing of the Government of Sweden and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, ESCWA is continuing a multi-year project to bolster food and water security in the region by generating unique national and regional data, designing coordinated regional policies and helping Governments to deal with the problems of dwindling arable lands, increased water scarcity and growing demand for food. The support of Sweden and Germany has enabled ESCWA to continue to lead the RICCAR initiative.

Germany, through the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), has continued to support ESCWA with the ongoing Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region (ACCWAM) project. It also assisted with preparation of the Training Manual on the Integrated Vulnerability Assessment and an associated

RICCAR regional workshop. Germany and Norway maintained support for the National Agenda for the Future of Syria (NAFS) project on policy options for post-conflict transition in the Syrian Arab Republic.

With support from the United Arab Emirates, ESCWA produced three substantive studies aimed at promoting the knowledge society in the Arab region, with guidelines on how to promote the emergence of smart and sustainable cities, integrate e-services and enhance m-government services.

ESCWA is working with the Supreme Council for Women in Bahrain on a regional project on “institutionalizing gender on the organizational level”. The idea is to adapt the United Nations System Wide Action Plan (SWAP) on gender equality to the Arab context and develop the region’s first analytical and accountability framework for gender equality.



REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND NGOS

In 2015, ESCWA carried out surveys on energy use in the transport sector in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine with the support of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID).

The Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RECREE) and ESCWA together developed online training materials in the course of the year on energy statistics in Arab countries, and made them available on a dynamic website.

Partnership with the Arab Gulf Programme for Development (AGFUND) on participatory governance, public sector reform, institutional strengthening and enhancing resilience among the Arab countries continued in 2015 in the form of a series of capacity-building workshops on partnership in democratic governance, building on the training toolkit developed in 2014 and published in 2015.

ESCWA and the Arab Association for Social Security produced a study in 2015 on governance and reforming social security institutions in the Arab world. It has already generated interest in Iraq in terms of how such reform can be a part of transitional justice.

In 2015, ESCWA joined the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) to develop a training module on Climate Change Adaptation in the Agricultural Sector by Applying IWRM (Integrated Water Resources Management) Tools.

ESCWA also collaborates regularly with the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA). In 2015, they worked together to implement the MDG+ Initiative and prepare a training module on climate change adaptation in human settlements.

The Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) has been a key partner of ESCWA for years. In 2015, this partnership was essential in ensuring the wide participation of civil society entities in consultations on the post-2015 development agenda and the commemoration of the World Day of Social Justice.

The Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) is a key institution for research on gender and the status of women in the region. In 2015, it played a major role in producing the ESCWA toolkit on gender-based violence.

ESCWA has forged an institutional partnership with the West Asia-North Africa (WANA) Institute to work together in a number of fields, such as assisting host communities and refugees.

A CLOSE PARTNERSHIP: ESCWA AND THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

The League of Arab States continued to be one of the main regional partners of ESCWA in 2015. They worked together on Arab preparations for talks on the 2030 Agenda and issues including climate change, migration and digital Arabic content.

In 2015, the two bodies organized regional capacity-building workshops on climate change negotiations,

the Arab customs union and partnership in democratic governance, and meetings on regional cooperation in addressing food and water security, population priorities, and digital Arabic content.

The League of Arab States also hosted the annual meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for United Nations Agencies in the Arab region.



ACADEMIA AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

During 2015, ESCWA's partnership with the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) focused on study of the impact of conflict on development in Arab countries over the coming 30 years. In the course of the year, ESCWA joined the New York University Abu Dhabi Institute to hold an event on gender, labour and women's empowerment in the Arab region, and the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies of the American University in Cairo to run a meeting on women and girls in conflict and humanitarian settings in the Arab region.

In collaboration with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and Birzeit University in Palestine, ESCWA conducted a detailed analysis in 2015 of the

impact of the Israeli offensive in summer 2014 and eight years of blockade on living conditions in the Gaza Strip. The findings will guide the setting of priorities for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People.

Partnership with the Iraqi Business Council was instrumental in promoting civil society participation in the establishment of the National Committee of Practice on Participatory Development and Public Policy Processes. A good example of cooperation with the private sector was the 2015 Arab Internet Governance Forum, which was hosted by Ogero Telecom in Lebanon.

ESCWA LEADS THE WAY IN SUPPORT OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

ESCWA chaired the Inter-Agency Support Group for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2015 as it advocated for the rights of such persons, in particular through contributions ahead of the 2016 World

Humanitarian Summit and a joint side event during the eighth Conference of States Parties to the Convention, held between 9 and 11 June.



UNITED NATIONS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

ESCWA plays a leading role in coordinating regional United Nations policy through the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM). In 2015, ESCWA organized a meeting in November in Cairo, hosted by the League of Arab States. It focused on the role of United Nations agencies in supporting the adaptation, adoption, implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in the Arab region.

ESCWA worked closely with the International Organization for Migration in 2015 to strengthen the Regional Working Group on International Migration and Development and

finalize the 2015 Situation Report on International Migration: Migration, Displacement and Development in a Changing Arab Region (E/ESCWA/SDD/2015/1).

The main objective of the partnership between ESCWA and UN-Habitat in 2015-2016 is to shape the Arab region's contribution to the global Habitat III process. In 2015, ESCWA and UN-Habitat prepared a regional report on urban trends in the region over the previous 20 years, and priorities and drivers for change related to urbanization and development.

ESCWA COORDINATES REGIONAL COMMISSIONS IN 2015

In 2015, ESCWA became coordinator of the United Nations regional commissions, with a mandate to harmonize their contributions to international conferences, monitor global agendas, and oversee management practices and reforms, in conjunction with the commissions' New York Office (RCNYO). During its year as coordinator, ESCWA synchronized contributions by commissions to the process leading up to the launch of the 2030 Agenda, the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, in July, and the Sustainable Development Summit in

September. On 9 July, ESCWA and RCNYO staged a dialogue of the executive secretaries of the Commissions with the Economic and Social Council on transition to the SDGs at the regional level on 9 July. They also helped to organize a dialogue on 23 October between the executive secretaries and the Second Committee on the role of the Commissions in implementing the 2030 Agenda. At the end of 2015, ESCWA handed over responsibility to the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) was a key partner in the sixteenth annual meeting of the Heads of National Population Councils, held in March, and a meeting in New York in April to inform participating Arab countries in the Commission on Population and Development on the development of population indicators.

ESCWA also supported the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in developing its new strategy, "Towards Collective Action in Achieving Education 2030 Goal in the Arab Region". The two bodies organized an event for the World Day of Social Justice, highlighting the importance of education and youth participation at all levels as a means of achieving social justice.

In 2015, ESCWA contributed to the preparation of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6) report of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which is due out in 2017, while the Programme continued to help to mainstream environmental issues into the Commission's programmes.

UN-Women works with ESCWA to promote gender equality. One of their joint ongoing projects involves designing a model to estimate the economic cost of violence against women in the Arab region. Partnership between them and the League of Arab States led to the adoption by the Arab States of a declaration on justice and equality for women in the region.



FEATURED PUBLICATIONS



2015 SITUATION REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: MIGRATION, DISPLACEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN A CHANGING ARAB REGION

Today, three interrelated patterns of migration may be observed in the Arab countries: regular and irregular labour migration, forced migration and mixed migration flows. The report aims to convey a comprehensive update on the situation in order to facilitate appropriate responses. It provides a multidisciplinary and comprehensive overview of migration trends, and their economic and social consequences in the region, and highlights the need for a coordinated and holistic approach to the matter.

Publication symbol: E/ESCWA/SDD/2015/1
Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/2015-situation-report-international-migration-migration-displacement-and-development-0>



AGAINST WIND AND TIDES: A REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ARAB REGION (BEIJING +20)

Building on the momentum of the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and in the light of the SDGs, this study analyses key achievements, remaining obstacles and emerging threats to gender equality in the Arab region. It looks at 12 critical social, economic, legal, institutional and political areas of concern. The analysis is designed to provide a sound basis for developing policies and strategies for change in the years to come.

Publication symbol: E/ESCWA/ECW/2015/3
Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/Women-Gender-Equality-Arab-Region>



ANALYSIS OF ENERGY POLICY TRENDS IN THE ARAB REGION

The paper examines past policy and how it shaped domestic energy trends, current policies and institutions, and their capacity for reversing today's unsustainable situation in the Arab region and meeting present and future sustainable development and energy security needs.

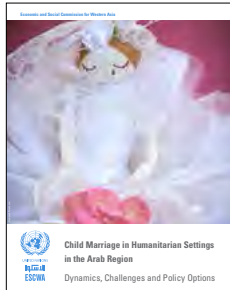
Publication symbol: E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/5
Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/analysis-energy-policy-trends-arab-region>



ARAB SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

In the light of the 17 global SDGs, this first edition of the report focuses on top priority issues for the Arab region. It provides (a) a snapshot on the status and progress on sustainable development across priority thematic issues over the past two decades; (b) an analysis of sustainable development challenges and opportunities; and (c) recommendations for preparing the region for the 2030 agenda. The report was in part informed by national sustainable development assessments conducted for Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen. A wide range of United Nations agencies working in the Arab region, along with regional and international experts, national Governments and other stakeholders were involved in the preparation of the report, which is jointly published by ESCWA and UNEP.

Publication symbol: E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/3
Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/arab-sustainable-development-report-2015>



CHILD MARRIAGE IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS IN THE ARAB REGION: DYNAMICS, CHALLENGES AND POLICY OPTIONS

This study examines the sociocultural and structural causes for child marriage in the Arab region, the social and economic factors that motivate child marriage in humanitarian settings, and its economic and health impact. It includes recommendations on how to prevent and respond to child marriage as a form of gender-based violence and as a violation of girls' human rights.

Publication symbol: E/ESCWA/ECW/2015/2
Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/child-marriage-humanitarian-settings-arab-region-dynamics-challenges-and-policy-options>



ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE SERIES: COMPETITION POLICY AND REGULATION IN THE ARAB REGION

This report reviews the implementation and enforcement of competition legislation in various Arab countries. It proposes key recommendations to enhance economic development in national and regional markets through improvements in competition policy regimes.

Publication symbol: E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/5
Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/competition-regulation-arab-region>



ESCWA WATER DEVELOPMENT REPORT 6: THE WATER, ENERGY AND FOOD SECURITY NEXUS IN THE ARAB REGION

This biennial report analyses the links between water, energy and food security in the Arab region in the light of the SDGs. It proposes a conceptual framework within which these issues are treated in connection with one another, taking into account climate change, difficulties regarding access to food, water and sustainable energy for all, and a rights-based approach to sustainable development.

Publication symbol: E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/2
Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/escwa-water-development-report-6-water-energy-and-food-security-nexus-arab-region>



INCLUSIVE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The report maps out key aspects of inclusive social development in the Arab region and reviews the present situation in the areas of employment, social protection, and access to health care, education and housing services. It suggests how social inclusion might be mainstreamed across policies, and provides recommendations on designing and implementing more socially inclusive development approaches.

Publication symbol: E/ESCWA/SDD/2015/2
Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/inclusive-social-development-2015>



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON CYBERSAFETY AND COMBATING CYBERCRIME IN THE ARAB REGION (SUMMARY)

This study examines the vulnerability of the Internet to abuse and proposes a legal/regulatory procedural framework for combating cyberthreats, improving user cybersafety and building confidence in cyberspace in the Arab region. It stresses the importance of raising awareness and building capacities at different levels.

Publication symbol: [E/ESCWA/TDD/2015/1/SUMMARY](https://www.unescwa.org/publications/policy-recommendations-cybersafety-and-combating-cybercrime-arab-region-summary)
 Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/policy-recommendations-cybersafety-and-combating-cybercrime-arab-region-summary>



STATUS OF ARAB WOMEN REPORT: ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE ARAB REGION: FROM RATIFICATION TO IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

In spite of the awareness in most Arab States of the need to promote gender equality, there are manifest shortcomings on the ground in terms of the right of access of women and girls to justice. This study examines the extent of those shortcomings and what is being done to enforce international law on this subject. It also looks at how the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women is implemented de jure in the Arab region and contains policy recommendations.

Publication symbol: [E/ESCWA/ECW/2015/1](https://www.unescwa.org/publications/access-justice-women-arab-region-2015)
 Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/access-justice-women-arab-region-2015>



SURVEY OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB REGION 2014-2015

Arab countries have shown resilience in the face of adverse external socioeconomic conditions such as low oil prices, social unrest and armed violence. However, this report finds that the current price level for crude oil and fuel products is inevitably having an impact on development in Arab countries. It emphasizes the need for regional cooperation in order to optimize the area's human capital and financial wealth for higher sustainable regional growth in an increasingly tough socioeconomic environment.

Publication symbol: [E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/2](https://www.unescwa.org/publications/survey-economic-and-social-development-arab-region-2014-2015)
 Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/survey-economic-and-social-development-arab-region-2014-2015>



TRADE LOGISTICS IN THE ARAB REGION: CHALLENGES AND POLICY OPTIONS

This study investigates the relationship between efficient trade logistics, and trade and economic performance using a dynamic computable general equilibrium (CGE) model and taking Tunisia as a case study. The analysis focuses on the impact of additional investments in trade logistics capital stock on key macroeconomic indicators. A simulation scenario looks at the macroeconomic impacts on the Tunisian economy of catching up halfway to the rank of the top performing Arab country, the United Arab Emirates. The study also examines ways to finance investment in infrastructure.

Publication symbol: [E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/1](https://www.unescwa.org/publications/trade-logistics-arab-region-2014)
 Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/trade-logistics-arab-region-2014>



TRENDS AND IMPACTS IN CONFLICT SETTINGS ISSUE NO. 3: POLITICAL POLARIZATION OR COMMON GROUND?

Arab countries have the youngest populations in the world. This study revisits the youth bulge arguments dominating post-Arab uprising literature, which have often linked young demographics to violence and instability, and explores the extent to which polarization is youth-driven. The results for nine Arab countries in transition show that, in terms of political orientation, young people cannot be seen as a cohesive category, although they may show similar participation patterns.

Publication symbol: E/ESCWA/ECRI/2015/1

Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/trends-impacts-conflict-political-polarization-youth>



TRENDS AND IMPACTS ISSUE NO. 4: PROTRACTED CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB REGION

This report examines the consequences of conflict for development in the affected countries and its main neighbourhood effects. It confirms the close and significant relationship between unemployment, lack of opportunities for youth and conflict intensity in the Arab region. The study argues that the accumulation of governance deficits, the fragmentation of rebel groups and the spread of radical ideologies have prolonged conflict and placed major obstacles in the way of peacebuilding efforts.

Publication symbol: E/ESCWA/ECRI/2015/2

Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/trends-impacts-issue4-protracted-conflict-development-arab-region>



COMPENDIUM OF ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS IN THE ARAB REGION 2014-2015

The Compendium of Environment Statistics in the Arab Region 2014-2015 provides an overview on environmental issues of relevance to the region, and detailed statistical tables and charts on freshwater resources, fisheries, biodiversity, air pollution and climate change, energy consumption, waste management, and Goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals, which focuses on ensuring environmental sustainability. It also presents detailed data on carbon dioxide emissions by sector and index calculations for emissions.

Symbol: E/ESCWA/SD/2015/3

Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/compendium-environment-statistics-arab-region-2014-2015>

