

Chapter V

Regional economic and social activities

In 2006, the five regional commissions of the United Nations continued to provide technical cooperation, including advisory services, to their member States. They also promoted programmes and projects and provided training to enhance national capacity-building in various sectors. All of them—the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)—held regular sessions during the year.

The executive secretaries of the commissions continued to meet periodically to exchange views and coordinate activities and positions on major development issues. In July, the Economic and Social Council held an interactive dialogue with the executive secretaries on the theme “The regional dimension of creating an environment conducive to generating full and productive employment, and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development”.

During the year, the Council endorsed the ECE workplan on reform and its revised terms of reference. The General Assembly welcomed ECA efforts to conduct a comprehensive review in order to reposition the Commission to respond better to the challenges facing Africa. ESCWA approved in principle the establishment of an ESCWA Technology Centre and adopted the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network. Its Ministers of Transport adopted draft declarations on road safety and transport, aimed at developing integrated intermodal transport and logistics systems. ECLAC asked its Executive Secretary to coordinate annual regional reports with other UN agencies, funds and programmes on progress made toward achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on hunger and poverty reduction, and to coordinate, in 2010, a regional inter-agency report summing up progress during the 2006-2010 period on all MDG targets. It asked its Executive Secretary to support the Montevideo resolution on shaping the future of social protection: access, financing and solidarity. The Council approved the admission of Japan as a member of ECLAC. In addi-

tion, ECLAC admitted the Turks and Caicos Islands as an associate member.

Regional cooperation

In 2006, the United Nations continued to strengthen cooperation among its five regional commissions, between them and other UN entities, and with regional and international organizations.

On 10 February (**decision 2006/211**), the Economic and Social Council decided that the theme for the regional cooperation item at its 2006 substantive session would be “The regional dimension of creating an environment conducive to generating full and productive employment, and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development”. Accordingly, the Council held an interactive dialogue with the executive secretaries of the regional commissions on that subject on 6 July.

Meetings of executive secretaries. The executive secretaries of the regional commissions met from 3 to 7 July (Geneva), and from 17 to 19 October (New York) [E/2006/15, E/2007/15].

At their meetings, the executive secretaries focused mainly on the 2005 World Summit and its outcome contained in resolution 60/1 [YUN 2005, p. 48], progress made toward achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) [YUN 2000, p. 51], the World Summit on the Information Society [YUN 2005, p. 933] and the efforts of the regional commissions to mainstream a regional dimension into the Organization’s overall work in the economic and social sectors. They exchanged views also on the UN reform process, among other subjects, and on the problem of unemployment in their regions.

In their view, the World Summit Outcome underlined the need to bring the commissions’ analytical and normative work and the regional dimension of development to bear on development work at the country level through strengthened coordination among the Organization’s country teams and the regional commissions. The commissions also kept under review the follow-up actions needed to implement the World Summit Outcome and

the subsequent initiatives taken by the General Assembly on the review of mandates, reform of the Economic and Social Council and the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In compliance with the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the executive secretaries coordinated the efforts of the regional commissions in reviewing all mandates older than five years, resulting in a call for strengthening the global and regional linkages of mandates in tourism, trade and investment, information and communication technology, and population and migration. They welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative to strengthen system-wide coherence in order to provide more streamlined and cost-effective services for developing countries, including the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, and countries with economies in transition. In follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society, they agreed to promote inter-regional cooperation and exchange of experiences among the commissions, by, among other things, undertaking projects under the United Nations Development Account and cooperating with the Digital Solidarity Fund. They also exchanged views on unemployment in their regions and held two interregional seminars (Bangkok, 20-21 April) on their respective region's macroeconomic situation, development challenges and infrastructure development, as well as on public-private partnerships and other multiple sources of financing. Given the growing need for a coordinated approach on a variety of issues and for programme effectiveness and cooperation among the regional commissions, the executive secretaries decided to organize meetings of the chiefs of programme planning, as a subsidiary structure to their meeting, which would report to them through the Regional Commissions New York Office. The meetings would support the strengthening of interregional cooperation and cooperation among the commissions and ensure more coherence in programme planning and results-based budgeting.

Review and reform of regional commissions

In a May report [E/2006/15], the Secretary-General updated the Economic and Social Council on actions taken by the regional commissions to implement the guidance given in Council resolution 1998/46 [YUN 1998, p. 1262] on mainstreaming the regional dimension into the work of the United Nations and enhancing the coherence of UN activities at the regional level. The report highlighted the reforms and

programmatic adjustments undertaken in ECE, ECA, ESCAP and ESCWA. The commissions, while preparing the 2006-2007 programme budget, had significantly streamlined their programme structures and undertaken a detailed review of outputs associated with low priority and obsolete mandates.

An addendum to the report [E/2006/15/Add.1] contained the texts of resolutions and decisions adopted at recent meetings of the regional commissions and drawn to the Council's attention for consideration or action.

By **decision 2006/246** of 27 July, the Council took note of the Secretary-General's report and addendum. By the same decision, it took note of the summaries of: *Economic trends, as well as risks and opportunities, for the economies in the Economic Commission for Europe region* [E/2006/16]; the *Overview of the Economic Report on Africa 2006: "Recent economic trends in Africa and prospects for 2006"* [E/2006/17]; the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 2006* [E/2006/18]; *Latin America and the Caribbean: economic situation and outlook, 2005-2006* [E/2006/19]; and the *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA region 2005-2006* [E/2006/20].

The Council adopted resolutions on the workplan on reform of ECE and revised terms of reference of the Commission (resolution 2006/38); the admission of Japan as a member of ECLAC (resolution 2006/39); the date and venue of the thirty-second session of ECLAC (resolution 2006/40); and a decision changing the dates of the twenty-ninth session of ECA (decision 2006/205).

(For the summaries of economic surveys covering the regions and the texts of the resolutions, see the relevant sections of this chapter.)

Africa

In accordance with Economic and Social Council **decision 2006/205** of 7 February, the thirty-ninth session of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)/Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 10 to 14 May, under the theme "Meeting the challenge of employment in Africa".

The session considered the report and major recommendations of the twenty-fifth meeting of the Committee of Experts of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development [E/ECA/CM.39/8], which preceded the session (Ouagadougou, 10-13 May), and dis-

cussed the session's agenda and statutory issues. It also had before it the ECA 2006 annual report [E/ECA/CM.39/2]; the 2005 Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in Africa [E/ECA/CM.39/3/Rev.1]; an issues paper on meeting the challenge of employment in Africa [E/ECA/CM.39/4]; a report on progress and challenges in aligning poverty reduction strategies with the MDGs [E/ECA/CM.39/5]; a note by the secretariat entitled "Follow-up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome: ECA Response" [E/ECA/CM.39/6]; a note by the Executive Secretary on repositioning ECA to better respond to Africa's priorities [E/ECA/CM.39/7]; an African LDCs strategy paper for the further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 [E/ECA/CM.39/12]; a joint report of the ECA, African Union Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the: proceedings of the African plenary on national poverty reduction strategies and the implementation of the MDGs [E/ECA/CM.39/10]; and an outcome statement entitled "African plenary on national poverty reduction strategies and the implementation of the MDGs" that was adopted by the ECA, the African Union Commission and UNDP during their 26-28 March, 2006 meeting in Cairo [E/ECA/CM.39/11].

The Ministers adopted a ministerial statement [E/ECA/CM.39/9/Rev.1], in which they committed to incorporating employment objectives into national development strategies and policies in order to create decent jobs in Africa, and increasing domestic resource mobilization efforts, while urging development partners to honour their aid commitments to Africa and to fully implement and expand the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative [YUN 2005, p. 1057]. They also undertook to include employment criteria in investment promotion policies and improve the quality of public finance management, alongside the development of accurate statistical and information systems to monitor the impact of policies. The Ministers expressed concern over the lack of comprehensive implementation of the 2004 Ouagadougou Plan of Action, the failure to integrate employment into national development strategies, and weak sub-regional and national coordination. They acknowledged the particularly fragile situation of African countries emerging from conflict and asked ECA to set up a Technical Capacity Building Forum and a funding initiative to support job creation and re-establish economic development management systems. To stimulate transformation and diversification, they undertook to adopt growth oriented macro- and micro-economic policies; identify and promote labour-absorbing sectors; enhance labour

mobility and pursue an integrated rural development approach. Recognizing that stronger regional integration could stimulate job creation, the Ministers committed to ratifying bilateral and regional protocols on the free cross-border movement of goods and people and urged development partners to level the trade playing field for African countries, including by removing constraints imposed by the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and Trade-Related Investment Measures. The Ministers took note of the African Union (AU) Migration Policy Framework and Common African Position on International Migration and pledged to actively help shape the UN Secretary-General's initiative on international migration (see p. 1259).

The Ministers welcomed the Executive Secretary's initiative for repositioning ECA to improve the delivery of services. They encouraged him to pursue the proposal to refocus ECA work around two pillars: promoting regional integration; and meeting Africa's special needs and the global challenges facing the continent, as well as strengthening statistics and ECA subregional offices. The Ministers encouraged ECA to pay attention to the special needs of conflict and post-conflict countries and make peace, security and post-conflict recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation one of its major areas of work.

Economic trends

In 2006, Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 5.7 per cent, up from 5.3 per cent in 2005, according to the Overview of the economic and social conditions in Africa 2007 [E/2007/17]. The growth was attributed to good macroeconomic management, strong demand for and higher prices of primary commodities, such as crude oil, metals and minerals, as well as debt relief, increased external capital flows and an improved political climate. North Africa led the continent with a GDP growth rate of 6.6 per cent, followed by Southern Africa at 5.9 per cent. However, West Africa's growth dropped to 4.2 per cent in 2006, from 5.4 per cent in 2005, East Africa from 6.1 per cent in 2005 to 5.8 per cent in 2006 and Central Africa, from 3.6 to 3.3 per cent. Higher oil prices resulted in stronger growth in North Africa, which grew from 5.2 to 6.6 per cent, due to steady growth in the secondary and tertiary sectors. By country, eight of the top 10 growth performers achieved the 7 per cent growth rate threshold estimated as needed to reach the MDGs (Angola, the Congo, Ethiopia, Liberia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Mozambique, the

Sudan), while five others (Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Seychelles, Swaziland, Zimbabwe) exhibited the weakest performance.

The average fiscal position on the continent continued to be positive, with an average budget balance of 0.1 per cent of GDP in 2006, compared to 0.4 per cent in 2005. That was largely driven by the sizeable fiscal surpluses recorded by many oil-exporting countries. However, 30 countries had budget deficits, up from 27 in 2005, owing to oil price increases that resulted in higher government expenditures. The inflation outlook remained satisfactory, with a majority of countries recording single-digit inflation rates. Only Zimbabwe, with an inflation rate of 1,216 per cent, and Guinea, with a rate of 27 per cent, were the main exceptions. However, the average consumer price inflation rate increased to 9.9 per cent in 2006, from 8.5 per cent in 2005, fuelled largely by higher oil prices and the subsequent increase in production costs and lower output. The continent's oil-exporting countries recorded increasing trade surpluses, while oil importing countries, particularly the landlocked developing countries, saw their trade deficit deteriorate from 4 per cent of GDP to 11 per cent. The continent's total external debt stock stood at \$244 billion and debt-service obligations remained almost unchanged at 4.1 per cent in 2006.

Africa/China Forum. On 15 November [A/61/580-S/2006/897], China, the Congo and Ethiopia transmitted to the Secretary-General the text of the speeches made at the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (4 November) and the Declaration of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. The Forum adopted the Beijing Action Plan of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (2007-2009).

Activities in 2006

The ECA programme of work in 2006 was organized under eight subprogrammes: facilitating economic and social policy analysis; fostering sustainable development; strengthening development management; harnessing information for development; promoting trade and regional integration; promoting the advancement of women; supporting subregional activities for development; and development planning and administration [E/ECA/CM.39/2].

Facilitating economic and social policy analysis

In 2006, ECA continued to help member States strengthen their capacity to design and implement

appropriate policies to achieve sustained economic growth for poverty reduction, in line with the priorities of the Millennium Declaration [YUN 2000, p. 49] and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) [YUN 2001, p. 900]. Particular emphasis was placed on monitoring and tracking Africa's economic performance; conducting research and policy analysis on macroeconomic, financial and social issues; and strengthening the statistical capacities of African countries for monitoring progress toward the MDGs. ECA organized, with the AU and the African Development Bank, the African Plenary on Poverty Reduction Strategies and the Implementation of the MDGs (Cairo, Egypt, March). Its new subprogramme on social development was responsible for issues relating to the MDGs and poverty analysis and monitoring.

ECA convened an African regional meeting in February, in preparation for the global mid-term review of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 [YUN 2001, p. 770] (see p. 1014), during which it agreed on a set of actions to expedite progress toward meeting the Programme of Action's targets. An African plenary meeting in March, in Cairo, Egypt, on poverty-reduction strategies and implementation of the MDGs resulted in the launch of an Internet-based Poverty Reduction Strategy Knowledge Network linking scholars and practitioners worldwide. In addition, ECA collaborated in the holding of the second Forum on African Statistical Development (Addis Ababa, 9-10 February) to review and endorse the Regional Reference Strategic Framework for African Statistical Development, which provided an action framework for African statistical development over the next 10 years. In collaboration with the UN Statistics Division and other partners, it organized a meeting in February (Cape Town, South Africa) on the 2010 round of population and housing censuses.

The secretariat submitted to the Commission's May session an issues paper on employment in Africa [E/ECA/CM.39/4], which identified the continent's main employment challenges and provided recommendations on how to integrate employment into national development policies.

New Partnership for Africa's Development

ECA continued to contribute to the implementation of NEPAD, a programme for the continent's development that was initiated by African leaders in 2001 [YUN 2001, p. 900]. Most NEPAD priorities were at the core of the ECA mandate and were supported through its analytical work and technical assistance in infrastructure development, governance,

peace and security, agriculture, trade and market access, environment, population and urbanization, human resources development, employment, HIV/AIDS, science and technology and communication and outreach.

ECA provided substantive technical support to two major AU/NEPAD Summits related to the implementation of the NEPAD Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme. The African Fertilizer Summit (Abuja, Nigeria, June) called on ECA to collaborate with regional partners in following up on the implementation of its resolutions on the establishment of regional fertilizer procurement and distribution facilities, and of an African Fertilizer Development Financing Facility.

Under the ECA repositioning exercise, the NEPAD Unit was merged into the subprogramme on regional integration to enhance synergies and strengthen ECA role in coordinating regional support to NEPAD. The new Division, NEPAD and Regional Integration, reviewed the regional consultations among UN system agencies in support of NEPAD in order to improve its effectiveness and impact. The Division collaborated with the NEPAD secretariat in organizing capacity-building workshops that led to the further elaboration of implementation strategies for NEPAD priorities. In November, ECA convened the seventh regional consultations meeting of UN agencies with the AU Commission, the regional economic communities and the African Development Bank, which adopted recommendations for strengthening coordination and revitalizing the Cluster System (see p. 1071); fostering subregional coordination; improving coordination between the AU and African regional institutions; monitoring and evaluating actions and outcomes; and mobilizing resources and enhancing capacity.

Information for development

ECA activities on harnessing information for development had the objective of further strengthening the growth of a sustainable information society in Africa that better addressed the continent's development challenges. Its work focused on: harnessing information technology for development through implementation of the African Information Society Initiative [YUN 1996, p. 880]; strengthening geo-information systems for sustainable development; and improving access to information through enhanced library services.

To bridge the digital divide and strengthen information and communication technology (ICT) application in the economic sectors, ECA launched an ICT trade and economic growth initiative in partnership with Canada, to support the use of

ICTs in economic performance and growth, build competitiveness, and increase growth in traditional and emerging sectors of African economies and the continent's export base in IT-enabled services (ITES). Since September 2005, ECA and the Economic Community of West African States had been working to create a subregional ICT policy framework that would address the challenges of building the information society, including harmonizing national ICT policies and plans. It also supported the Economic Community of Central African States and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) in implementing the e-CEMAC 2010 initiative. ECA also assisted the East African Community in developing its Regional e-Government Framework, which was aimed at information sharing and promoting collaboration on cross-border data flow issues.

ECA continued to implement its initiative, SCAN-ICT, with the objective of building and strengthening the capacity of member States to develop indicators and benchmarks for monitoring and assessing information society trends. In late 2006, Cameroon, the Gambia, Ghana, Mauritius and Rwanda began developing web-based resources and databases to collect core ICT for development indicators. The regional information society indicators database for Africa would eventually be integrated into a global database to allow for comparison.

Information for development-related knowledge resources were produced and widely disseminated during 2006, including two video programmes entitled "Ensuring ICT for All" and "Community-based access: ensuring multi-stakeholder dialogue".

Sustainable development

ECA activities in fostering sustainable development aimed to promote awareness of the environmental foundations of sustainable development, with particular emphasis on integrating environmental sustainability into national development processes and poverty reduction strategies so that environmental degradation would not undermine socio-economic development. They focused on: reinforcing the links among food security, population, environment and human settlements; improving stewardship of natural resources by strengthening sustainable exploration capacity; and building capacity to use science and technology for sustainable development.

ECA work on trade and development sought to promote sustainable development by enhancing the capacity of Governments, businesses and civil society to integrate environmental considerations into trade and financial policies and practices, as well as

plans for achieving the MDGs and poverty reduction. The impact in member States was reflected in the increase in the number of countries that were redefining their national strategies to include an environmental component. At a regional ECA workshop (Addis Ababa, February), participants expressed concern that environmental issues had not been taken as seriously in trade negotiations within the WTO framework due to the weak negotiating capacities of African countries. They called for awareness raising and advocacy among African leaders on the importance of environmental issues and allocating more resource for the sector.

ECA continued to play a critical role in the AU-ECA-African Development Bank Joint Initiative on Land Policy, which supported NEPAD efforts and programmes related to agricultural development, environmental management, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction. ECA hosted a multi-stakeholder consultative workshop in March, which provided a platform for gaining consensus on the main land issues and pillars and the critical steps that would guide the formulation and implementation of the continental framework for land policy in Africa, modalities for building institutional capacity and partnerships for resource mobilization, development and implementation of the framework.

Development management

Addressing the challenge of establishing and sustaining good governance practices for broad stakeholder participation in the development process and strengthening the foundations for sustainable development in Africa remained the central objective of ECA work under its subprogramme on strengthening development management.

In March, ECA launched the first African Governance Report. The report, intended to promote consensus-building on key issues and develop, sustain and internalize the norms of good governance in Africa, provided significant input to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process in several countries. Indicators covered 27 countries and focused on issues of political representation, institutional effectiveness, and economic management and corporate governance. Several ad hoc expert group meetings and workshops were organized to review the results of research, analytical studies and publications prepared by the secretariat. They focused on best practices in participatory development; public financial management and accountability in the context of budget transparency in Africa; and the role of Africa's civil society in implementing the APRM. ECA also organized the sixth African Governance Forum on "Implementing the

African Peer Review Mechanism: challenges and opportunities" (Kigali, Rwanda, 9-11 May), in collaboration with UNDP and the African Development Bank. The Forum, which brought together participants from 32 African countries, took stock of experiences countries had gained thus far and explored how the APRM could be incorporated into the region's development efforts. Several countries presented reports resulting from national preparatory consultations. The Forum, in its key recommendations, called for further strengthening and adjustment of APRM processes to facilitate speedy implementation; mainstreaming the APRM into African countries' development plans and strategies in order to avoid duplication and secure greater coherence; creating partnerships and resource sharing arrangements among member States; and mutual learning through advocacy and awareness-building.

Promoting trade and regional integration

In 2006, ECA continued to help accelerate the integration of Africa into the global economy and strengthen regional integration through the promotion of intraregional and international trade and physical integration.

The African Trade Policy Centre, established in 2004 [YUN 2004, p. 998] to strengthen ECA capacity on trade-related issues, conducted in February a training session on international trade negotiations for African embassies based in Addis Ababa, with the aim of helping member States integrate trade into development plans. The Centre also conducted a far-reaching study on mainstreaming trade.

ECA and the AU launched their second report on regional integration in Africa entitled *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa II: Rationalizing Regional Economic Communities* during the AU Summit of Heads of State (Banjul, Gambia, 1-2 July). The report examined the challenges that the proliferation of those communities and their overlapping mandates posed for Africa's integration, as well as their effectiveness in achieving the objectives of the Abuja Treaty, which aimed to establish the African Economic Community. The report recommended that regional economic communities rationalize their institutional settings and strengthen them with technical, legal and financial resources.

Transport and communications

An important objective of ECA work in infrastructure development was to help set up an efficient, integrated and affordable transport and communications system, as a basis for Africa's physical inte-

gration and to facilitate national and international traffic. ECA conducted a study on the current status of transport development in Africa, the findings of which were fed into a symposium (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, May) on "Financing Transport Infrastructure Development in Africa", organized in cooperation with the African Development Bank. ECA also undertook preparatory activities for the fourth African Road Safety Congress, as well as for the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week, both scheduled for 2007.

Integration of women in development

The overall objective of the ECA subprogramme on promoting the advancement of women was to mainstream gender into development policies, programmes and structures of member States in order to ensure parity in resource distribution and enable women to participate in strategic decisions in economic and social development.

ECA provided national-level support to effectively implement the methods set forth in the Easy Reference Guidebook on Mainstreaming Unpaid Work and Household Production in National Statistics, Policies and Programmes [YUN 2005, p. 1083]. It also continued to develop and refine the gender-aware model to evaluate the impact of policies on poverty reduction and implementation of the MDGs in African countries. To address the lack of progress towards gender equality and women's advancement, ECA developed the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI), which contained a quantitative assessment of gender inequality in the social, economic and political sectors and a qualitative measurement of the extent to which member States had effectively implemented the conventions on gender equality and women's rights. AGDI country studies conducted in 12 countries were synthesized for publication in the Africa Women's report. In July, a subregional workshop was organized in Tunisia to assist Northern African members States in drawing up national action plans to accelerate efforts to address the commitments outlined in the Outcome and Way Forward document of Beijing + 10 [ibid., p. 1247]. ECA, in collaboration with the UNDP Regional Gender Programme of Africa Bureau set up an African Women's Human Rights Observatory, as a complementary source of data for awareness-raising and analysis to inform policy debates and sound policy-making.

Subregional offices

ECA five subregional offices (sros), located in East Africa (Kigali, Rwanda), Southern Africa

(Lusaka, Zambia), West Africa (Niamey, Niger), North Africa (Rabat, Morocco) and Central Africa (Yaounde, Cameroon), continued to promote the harmonization of national policies to support integration efforts and help countries consolidate regional economic communities in the overall AU framework and attain the goals set by NEPAD. A major priority was to support member States and the regional economic communities in translating NEPAD priorities into concrete projects and programmes at the country and subregional levels, particularly in trade, infrastructure, human capacity development, gender mainstreaming, agriculture, food security and the environment.

The sros served as the ECA operational arm, facilitating subregional economic cooperation and integration, as well as centres for policy dialogue, through workshops, training, data collection and knowledge sharing. In addition, they collaborated with other UN agencies in their respective subregions within the context of the UN Resident Coordinator system and the Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework to implement operational activities at the national level.

Strengthening of subregional offices

Review by Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary, in his comprehensive review of ECA, presented at the thirty-ninth session of the Commission, confirmed that, in the light of the AU Commission agenda, as well as from the perspective of NEPAD, the sros were among the most important instruments in enabling ECA to make meaningful contributions to meeting Africa's challenges. For them to play their role effectively, within the overall exercise for repositioning the Commission, action had to be taken in a number of key areas. Their mandate and mission had to be refocused; their products and services better designed; their delivery model revamped; their modalities improved through enhanced partnerships; and their resource base and use of ICTs significantly strengthened.

ECA, in the Ministerial Statement [E/ECA/CM.39/9/Rev.1] of its thirty-ninth session, supported the proposal to strengthen the sros. In resolution 844(XXXIX), the Ministers invited the Secretary-General to support the ECA renewal and reform process by providing it, including the sros, with adequate resources.

OIOS report. As requested in resolution 60/235 [YUN 2005, p. 1085], the Secretary-General, in September, submitted to the General Assembly a report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (oios) on enhancing the role of the sros [A/61/471].

The report examined the new strategic direction for the SROS, including a refocused mandate and mission, improved products and services and expected results; a new institutional governance framework; an SRO-driven planning and programming framework for ECA; improved modalities through enhanced partnerships; a strengthened resource base; and operational elements.

The report outlined the plan of action for strengthening ECA based on the OIOS recommendations. The report found that the SROS were a vital part of ECA. However, their mandate as the ECA operational arm, facilitators of subregional economic cooperation and integration and centres for policy dialogue was only partially fulfilled. Their core functions were inadequately funded, their role unclear, their visibility and outreach limited, and their support to regional economic communities varied in scope and effectiveness. Initiative, flexibility and multidisciplinary teamwork needed to be promoted. The impact of SROS could be enhanced through: more focused programming of activities; creative dissemination of information emphasizing electronic space and scaling-up of ICT capabilities; aligning staff expertise and skills with subregional priorities; and reliable mechanisms for cooperation between SROS and ECA headquarters. OIOS made 14 recommendations on a wide range of issues aimed at strengthening the SROS capacity to deliver programmes, improve coordination and energize their value for the UN system. The implementation of the action plan would be supported by a number of operational processes. Annexed to the report were the current and proposed ECA organizational structure and proposed staffing and a summary of specific actions to be taken in respect to the OIOS recommendations.

ACABQ report. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), in its October report on enhancing the role of the SROS [A/61/544], noted the 14 recommendations by OIOS to strengthen the capacity of SROS, and that implementation of the action plan was under way, with activities planned for the 2006-2007 and 2008-2009 bienniums, and funding of the additional resources required during the current biennium would be provided through redeployment of staff and non-post resources to the SROS. ACABQ requested that progress toward achieving the ECA target of deploying up to 30 per cent of its staff to SROS by the 2008-2009 biennium be monitored and included in future reports. It also welcomed the results achieved in reducing the vacancy rate. However, the Advisory Committee

felt that ECA current repositioning policy aimed at shifting towards operational rather than analytical work raised fundamental questions about the respective roles of the ECA headquarters and the SROS, as well as their integration with other UN entities in the region. It urged ECA to continue to review and define the role of the SROS, with a view to achieving synergies and optimal use of resources. ACABQ also requested that the budget proposals for the 2008-2009 biennium identify a clear link between requested financial and human resources and mandated activities, with the number and level of posts fully justified.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 22 December [meeting 84], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee [A/61/652], adopted **resolution 61/234** without vote [agenda items 116 & 117].

Enhancing the role of the subregional offices of the Economic Commission for Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 60/235 of 23 December 2005,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on enhancing the role of the subregional offices of the Economic Commission for Africa and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions;

2. *Recalls* its resolution 59/275 of 23 December 2004, in which it decided that the development of Africa should be among the priorities of the Organization for the period 2006-2007;

3. *Recalls also* its resolutions 57/2 of 16 September 2002 and 57/7 of 4 November 2002, and stresses the important role played by the Economic Commission for Africa in coordinating the activities of the United Nations system at the regional level in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

4. *Recalls further* its resolution 60/1 of 16 September 2005 and its commitment to address the special needs of Africa;

5. *Welcomes* the efforts by the Economic Commission for Africa to conduct a comprehensive review aimed at repositioning it to better respond to the challenges facing Africa and to implement the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services of the Secretariat;

6. *Recalls its request* to the Secretary-General in paragraph 12 of its resolution 60/235 to submit a comprehensive plan of action to strengthen the subregional offices, and notes with appreciation the steps taken to define the role and mission of the subregional offices so as to address the recommendations made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services;

7. *Recalls* paragraphs 9 and 12 of its resolution 60/235 and its request to the Secretary-General, in the context of the plan of action, to ensure that adequate resources are provided to the Economic Commission for Africa and its subregional offices to continue their support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the regional economic communities of Africa, as well as to ensure the full implementation of the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services;

8. *Recalls also* its concern expressed in paragraph 8 of its resolution 60/235, and notes that the repositioning exercise and implementation of the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services will be addressed through a redeployment of post and non-post resource requirements in the biennium 2006-2007 and that the Secretary-General will address remaining proposals for resources and reorganization in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in the context of his report on the comprehensive information and communication technology strategy of the Organization, to be submitted to the General Assembly at the first part of its resumed sixty-first session, to include detailed information on the implementation of paragraph 6 of its resolution 60/235.

Development, planning and administration

The objective of the subprogramme on development planning and administration, implemented by the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), was to enhance national capacity for formulating and implementing development policies and economic management through training. During 2006, IDEP trained 95 mid-career and senior officials from member States and the regional economic communities. IDEP main challenge was mobilizing extrabudgetary resources to meet the need for accelerated expansion in human capacity within African economic policy institutions.

ECA, at its thirty-ninth session, decided that to enable IDEP to play a more effective role, its structure and capacity should be reviewed and strengthened sequentially. The review was undertaken and its report would be presented to ECA at its fortieth (2007) session.

Construction of office facilities at ECA

In response to General Assembly resolution 56/270 [YUN 2002, p. 1458], the Secretary-General submitted a July report [A/61/158] on progress in the construction of additional office facilities at ECA headquarters in Addis Ababa. The report contained an update of actions taken to implement the project since the issuance of his previous report [YUN 2005, p. 1086]. It presented a breakdown of the cost plan (\$11,383,300), as approved by Assembly resolution

60/248 [ibid., p. 1494]. The report noted that additional land had been allocated by the host country to accommodate the expansion and action remained to be taken to finalize the host country agreement. The project time schedule was revised to include the construction of two additional floors simultaneously with the original approved project. Final construction documents were being completed and the selection of a general contractor was expected to be finalized in early 2007, with construction work to begin immediately thereafter.

ACABQ, in its September report on the project [A/61/362], noted that the cost increase resulting from the expansion of the scope of the project was in accordance with resolution 60/248 and that it had received assurance that no further increases were anticipated. It recommended that the Assembly take note of the Secretary-General's July report on construction progress.

The Assembly, in section II of **resolution 61/252** of 22 December (see p. 1614), took note of Ethiopia's efforts in facilitating the construction of additional office facilities for ECA in Addis Ababa, the Secretary-General's report thereon, and ACABQ observations.

Regional cooperation

Cooperation between UN and SADC

The Secretary-General, in his consolidated report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations [A/61/256 & Add.1], described cooperation between the Organization and its agencies funds and programmes with the Southern African Development Community (SADC), especially in the area of technical cooperation. ECA collaborated with SADC through its subregional office for Southern Africa in the development of policy frameworks for transport, ICT, mining, energy, gender, agriculture and HIV/AIDS. The two bodies were expected to sign a cooperation agreement covering regional integration, capacity-building and human resources development and resource mobilization for regional multisectoral projects and programmes.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 4 December [meeting 65], the General Assembly adopted **resolution 61/51** [draft: A/61/L.37 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 108 (t)].

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 37/248 of 21 December 1982 and all other relevant General Assembly resolutions and

decisions on the promotion of cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community, including resolutions 57/44 of 21 November 2002 and 59/140 of 15 December 2004 and decision 56/443 of 21 December 2001,

Recalling also its resolution 59/49 of 2 December 2004, in which it decided to invite the Community to participate in its sessions and its work in the capacity of observer,

Recognizing that cooperation between the Community and the United Nations system has continued to deepen,

Commending States members of the Community for demonstrating continued commitment to deeper and more formal arrangements for cooperation among themselves towards regional integration,

Welcoming the continued commitment made by the States members of the Community to deepen democracy, human rights, good governance and sound economic management,

Expressing satisfaction over continued efforts to bring peace to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, launched by the Community in collaboration with the African Union, the United Nations and other entities, and recognizing that the recent elections undertaken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to end the current transition period by the establishment of elected institutions at all levels are an essential element of the peace process,

Noting with concern that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has reached crisis proportions in the region, and that other communicable diseases, such as malaria and tuberculosis, are having far-reaching social and economic consequences,

Expressing concern over the persistent natural disasters in countries of the region,

Welcoming the efforts of the Community to make southern Africa a landmine-free zone,

Recognizing the important role that women play in the development of the region,

Recognizing also the important role of civil society and the private sector in the development of the region,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations;

2. *Expresses its appreciation* to the United Nations funds and programmes as well as the international community for the assistance given to the Southern African Development Community;

3. *Welcomes* the decision of the Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community at the summit held in Maseru on 17 and 18 August 2006 to convene a conference on poverty and development, to which the international community will be invited;

4. *Also welcomes* the progress made by the Community on gender and development towards achieving the target of 30 per cent representation of women in decision-making, and its commitment to the new target of 50 per cent;

5. *Notes with satisfaction* the commitment of States members of the Community to scale up the implementation of regional economic integration through, inter alia, the launching of a free trade area by 2008 and the preparations for a custom union by 2010;

6. *Expresses its support* for the economic reforms being implemented by States members of the Community, in pursuance of their shared vision of creating a strengthened regional economic community through deeper economic integration;

7. *Calls upon* the international community to strengthen support for the measures taken by the Community in fighting HIV and AIDS, as well as other communicable diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, including commitments on the follow-up to the outcome of the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly, and the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS;

8. *Recognizes* the vulnerability of the Community subregion to natural disasters, and in this regard calls upon the international community to provide the required assistance to strengthen the Community's disaster preparedness and early-warning capacity;

9. *Urges* the United Nations, its related bodies and the international community to continue to support the Community in building its capacity in negotiations on trade;

10. *Appeals* to the international community and to relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to continue providing financial, technical and material assistance to the Community to support its efforts to fully implement the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan and the New Partnership for Africa's Development as well as towards the achievement of other internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

11. *Appeals* to the United Nations, its related bodies and the international community to continue to assist and support the Community in its demining activities, and welcomes the progress made so far by its member States;

12. *Calls upon* the international community, in particular the United Nations system, to continue to contribute to the promotion of peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to assist in the rehabilitation and economic reconstruction of that country;

13. *Also calls upon* the international community to continue to assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo through the provision of humanitarian, financial and material assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Congolese people, in particular the children, women and the elderly, and calls upon the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to implement economic and social policies and programmes that will improve the lives of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

14. *Urges* the United Nations funds and programmes and the international community to continue to provide technical assistance to national vulnerability assessment committees that have been established in the States members of the Community;

15. *Calls upon* the international community to support the efforts of the Community in capacity-building and in addressing the new challenges, opportunities and consequences presented to the economies in the region arising from the process of globalization and liberalization;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Executive Secretary of the Community, to enhance contacts aimed at promoting and harmonizing further cooperation between the United Nations and the Community;

17. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session a report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community.

Cooperation between UN and ECCAS

The Secretary-General, in his consolidated report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations [A/61/256 & Add.1], described cooperation between the Organization and its agencies funds and programmes with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The United Nations considered the reinforcement of cooperation with ECCAS as an important step in strengthening the capacity of that subregional body to effectively promote peace as a prerequisite for development in Central Africa. It therefore gave priority to strengthening ECCAS capacity for conflict prevention, early warning, electoral assistance and peacekeeping. Through its subregional office for Central Africa, ECA supported ECCAS in strengthening its capacity to harmonize programmes and activities in selected sectors; implementing the Central Africa Transport Master Plan to support trade development and foster economic integration; assisting ECCAS member States on trade-related issues; and developing a Central Africa e-strategy for promoting ICT in socio-economic activities and the development of the information society.

The General Assembly, by **decision 61/552** of 22 December, decided that the agenda item on cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS would remain for consideration during its resumed sixty-first (2007) session.

Asia and the Pacific

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) held its sixty-second session in Jakarta, Indonesia, in two parts: the senior officials segment from 6 to 8 April and the ministerial segment from 10 to 12 April [E/2006/39]. The session's theme topic was "Enhancing regional

cooperation in infrastructure development, including that related to disaster management". The Commission discussed policy issues in the ESCAP region; implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific: the Way Forward 2015; key developments and activities at the regional level; least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States; management issues; ESCAP technical cooperation activities; reports of regional intergovernmental bodies; and the activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission [E/ESCAP/1384].

The Ministerial Round Table on Enhancing Regional Cooperation in Infrastructure Development, including that Related to Disaster Management was divided into two sessions. The first session consisted of a presentation by the Executive Secretary on the theme topic (see above) and had before it a note by the secretariat [E/ESCAP/1362] on the subject, while the second session heard presentations from delegations.

A special session on the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network was also held, as well as a briefing on the avian influenza.

On 12 April [E/2006/39 (dec. 62/2)], the Commission adopted the draft report on its sixty-second session, noting that, except for references to "the Commission elected" or "the Commission endorsed", all statements therein referred to views expressed by one or more delegates, and not to official views or decisions of the Commission.

Economic trends

According to the summary of the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 2007* [E/2007/18], the developing Asia-Pacific economies grew at a rate of 7.9 per cent, up from 7.6 per cent the previous year, and were for the eighth consecutive year the fastest-growing economies in the world, accounting for more than one-third of global growth in 2006, while the developed countries grew by 2.2 per cent. The region as a whole, which accounted for more than one third of global growth, was becoming the locomotive of that growth. The expansion was concentrated in the industrial and services sectors, with agriculture growing at a lesser pace.

Economic growth was broad-based, with all sub-regions performing robustly. North and Central Asia was one of the world's fastest-growing regions, led by Azerbaijan, with a blistering growth rate of 34.5 per cent, followed by Turkmenistan, 14 per

cent, Kazakhstan, 10.5 per cent, and the Russian Federation, 6.7 per cent. The demand for services grew as the hydrocarbon sector expanded.

East and North-East Asia achieved an impressive average economic growth of 8.5 per cent in 2006, led once again by China, which achieved a rate of 10.7 per cent. China served as an export platform for the region, while its enormous demand for raw materials and fuels continued to keep global oil and commodity prices high, aiding oil and commodity exporters throughout the region.

South and South-West Asia continued to experience strong economic expansion in 2006, with India, the largest economy in the subregion, leading the growth momentum by expanding 9.2 per cent, and Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka posting growth rates of more than 6.5 per cent, driven largely by gains in industry and services. Exports to all the subregion's countries increased, but imports rose even faster. The increase, due partly to higher oil prices, widened the current account surplus of Iran, the subregion's only net oil exporter, but increased the current accounts deficits in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Turkey.

Economic growth in the South-East Asian subregion was a robust 5.9 per cent in 2006, up from 5.6 per cent in 2005. Strong external demand, especially for electronics and, to a lesser extent, commodities, was the primary source of growth. As a result, the subregion's major economies posted current account surpluses, ranging from 25.9 per cent in Singapore to 0.9 per cent in Viet Nam. However, as in other subregions, higher oil prices created inflationary pressure.

With few exceptions, the Pacific island countries showed positive economic growth, ranging from slightly less than 2 per cent in Tonga to more than 6 per cent in Vanuatu. Growth was led by the primary sector in Papua New Guinea and the service sector in the smaller countries. Most of the subregion's countries maintained trade deficits, as imports, pushed higher by rising oil prices, continued to outpace exports.

All three developed countries of the region—Australia, Japan and New Zealand—enjoyed modest growth in 2006, expanding 2.2 per cent on average. Higher labour incomes supported household consumption in Australia and New Zealand, while sluggish labour incomes eroded it in Japan. The fiscal positions of Australia and New Zealand remained strong, but Japan's large debt accumulated during the decade-long recession of the 1990s still haunted its fiscal outlook.

Policy issues

The macroeconomic policy challenges facing Asia and the Pacific included high and volatile oil prices, which created inflationary pressures, depleted current account balances and reduced foreign reserves in some countries. Regional growth had so far been resilient to rising oil prices, aided by strong exports, high capital flows and a benign global economic environment, but further world oil hikes would adversely affect that growth, as well as inflation and current account balances.

The low level of domestic demand in East Asian economies had given rise to two interrelated concerns: the increased reliance on exports to drive economic growth, thus exposing those countries to the risk of a significant decline in external demand conditions; and the vulnerability of the region. Further financial reforms were needed to promote private investment in East Asia, including implementation of an improved risk-management system and prudential minimum payment and income requirements for credit cards to curb the excessive growth of consumer credit.

In mid-2006, the region's equity markets experienced their greatest drop since 2004. All countries in the region were affected, suffering record falls for the year and a reversal of the sustained period of increases in financial asset values. The uncertainty in financial markets warranted careful monitoring of the economic vulnerability of the region's countries in order to recognize danger signs as soon as possible.

Moreover, structural problems could hinder sustained growth and development in the future. ESCAP was bearing an increasing share of the regional and global environmental production-related burden. The failure of national policies to address growing environmental pressures would thwart growth; urgent strategies for "green" growth were needed.

There was evidence that urban poverty was growing rapidly, as urban slum-dwellers experienced the cumulative impact of an oversupply of labour, tenure insecurity, poor infrastructure, pollution and congestion. If that challenge went unmet, economic growth would be offset by increasingly high costs to keep urban centres functioning, making it more difficult to achieve the MDGs.

With regard to WTO, ESCAP developing economies were likely to be challenged to make concessions of a commercial value so that developed countries would remain committed to the Doha Development Agenda, adopted by WTO in 2001 [YUN 2001, p. 1432]. Revival of the Doha Development Round should be a priority for the region. Failure to conclude the

Doha Round was partly responsible for the proliferation of the bilateral and regional trading agreements.

At its 2006 session, ESCAP considered a report on the current economic situation in the region and related policy issues [E/ESCAP/1360] and the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 2006* [ST/ESCAP/2396].

The Commission noted that the region continued to enjoy robust economic growth, although high and unsustainable oil prices, increasing current account balances, the slow growth of global trade and the threat of the avian influenza pandemic had adversely affected business activity. Poverty, inequality and environmental decay were major challenges for the region, as well as raising the investment rate, which was necessary for achieving higher economic growth. Achieving the MDGs required an effective long-term strategy that included pro-poor economic growth and faster human development. Noting the problems faced by the region concerning unemployment and underemployment, the Commission stated that measures were needed to improve the functioning of labour markets and productivity and ensure that the workforce was provided with the relevant skills to succeed in the rapidly changing global economy. It urged the secretariat to continue to build capacity in the region to address unemployment and other emerging social issues. It emphasized that trade and investment and open economies were essential for ensuring economic growth and sustainable development. The Commission called for a strong commitment by member countries to strengthen social infrastructure and enhance efforts to empower vulnerable groups.

The Commission expressed support for the Asia-Pacific Business Forum 2006, organized by ESCAP, Indonesia and others, at the Commission's sixty-second session. The Forum was important in building and strengthening public-private partnerships.

Activities in 2006

Poverty reduction

The Commission had before it the report of the third session (Bangkok, 29 November–1 December) of the Committee on Poverty Reduction [E/ESCAP/CRP(3)/Rep], which analysed poverty in the informal sector, statistical challenges to assessing the achievement of the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals, strengthening national statistical capacity by promoting the 2010 round of population and housing censuses and programme planning and evaluation.

The Committee recognized that the commitment contained in the Jakarta Declaration on Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific: The Way Forward 2015 [A/60/313, annex] and Commission resolution 62/1 of 12 April 2006 (see p. 1158) on achieving the MDGs in the ESCAP region should form the basis for enhanced, sustained and concurrent actions at the regional level to reduce poverty and accelerate achievement of the MDG targets. Noting that several countries were finding it difficult to cost the MDGs, which was essential for mobilizing the necessary resources, the Committee asked the secretariat to help link countries that needed such assistance with relevant agencies, such as the UNDP Regional Centre in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The Committee recommended that the ESCAP secretariat should take more initiatives to assist member States to develop their respective informal sectors, particularly to build capacities for data collection and analysis, and develop and promote small and medium-sized enterprises and microfinance. It expressed the need for guidelines and a common definition of the informal sector to facilitate international comparison of that sector in Asia and the Pacific, and for the dissemination of international standards and methodologies employed in informal sector measurement. The secretariat should compile information on survey design and methodologies implemented in the region to disseminate best practices and inform future activities and collaborate with other regional and subregional bodies in informal sector measurement initiatives.

The Committee supported the secretariat's initiatives to improve the availability of data for assessing the progress made in achieving the MDGs, and endorsed the specific approaches proposed for strengthening national statistical capacity for data analysis and production through the use of administrative records and registers, and the 2010 round of population and housing censuses. The secretariat should also promote stronger coordination within national statistical systems and between them and international custodian agencies for MDG-related indicators. The Committee underscored the importance of the proposed ESCAP regional census programme.

The Commission also had before it notes by the secretariat on confronting poverty reduction in Asia and the Pacific [E/ESCAP/1365], a summary of progress in the implementation of resolutions relating to poverty reduction [E/ESCAP/1364 & Add.1], and a report on the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration [E/ESCAP/1363].

On 12 April [E/2006/39 (res. 62/1)], the Commission welcomed the efforts of countries that had national development strategies to meet the poverty reduction MDG, and invited countries that had not done so to make concrete efforts in that regard. It took note of the regional partnership on the MDGs among ESCAP, UNDP and the Asian Development Bank, which provided a consolidated regional platform to support the achievement of the goals. The Commission asked the Executive Secretary to strengthen political dialogue for development, including on technical assistance and capacity-building, in cooperation with other UN bodies and relevant organizations, with a view to developing appropriate ways to expedite achievement of the MDGs in ESCAP. The Executive Secretary should continue to assist ESCAP members and associate members to achieve the MDGs through capacity-building and technical cooperation; increase the effectiveness of ESCAP regional advisory services and its subsidiary bodies; continue to assess progress toward achieving the goals in Asia and the Pacific in cooperation with relevant international organizations and transmit a progress assessment to the Economic and Social Council; and develop recommendations for achieving the MDGs by 2015 in the form of a regional road map.

Statistics

During its sixty-second session (Jakarta, 6-12 April), the Commission had before it the annual report of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific [E/ESCAP/1381], whose statute was revised in 2005 by Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/36 [YUN 2005, p. 1091]. The report highlighted major developments of the Institute in 2005, the decisions and recommendations of the first session of its Governing Council under the revised statute; administrative matters and the programme of work and pledges and contributions.

On 12 April [E/2006/39 (res. 62/10)], the Commission invited members and associate members to give priority to strengthening their official statistical systems, and encouraged them, along with relevant international organizations and institutions with advanced statistical systems, to share expertise and information on their methodological, technological and managerial practices in statistical offices for the benefit of other countries in the region. It requested the Executive Secretary to assist them in developing their statistical systems; strengthening their capacity to monitor progress toward achieving the internationally agreed development goals; implementing international statistical standards in the region; facilitating regional discussion and the shar-

ing of information and good practices on official statistics, international capacity-building activities and the dissemination and use of data; and coordinating with regional and international agencies to collect official statistical data from members and associate members to avoid duplicating efforts and minimize the response burden on national statistical systems.

Managing globalization

The Commission had before it reports [E/ESCAP/1366, E/ESCAP/1368-1371] on key developments and activities at the regional level with regard to managing globalization, as well as a summary [E/ESCAP/1367 & Corr.1] of progress in implementing resolutions related to that theme.

On 12 April, the Commission [E/2006/39 (res. 62/6)], requested that the Executive Secretary continue, in collaboration with regional and global partners, to undertake policy-oriented analytical work and provide technical assistance to ESCAP members and associate members in order to increase their human and institutional capacity to negotiate, conclude and implement multilateral and regional trade agreements, with a specific focus on strengthening the WTO/ESCAP Programme of Technical Assistance for Asia and the Pacific; formulate and implement trade facilitation and e-commerce practices for enhancing international competitiveness; create a domestic policy environment conducive to the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and the mobilization of stable financial and investment flows; and promote a competitive knowledge-based economy through the development of science-based knowledge and technology transfer. The resolution also called on the Executive Secretary to evaluate and analyse regional and bilateral trade agreements involving ESCAP members; strengthen the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement to promote regional cooperation in trade and related issues; organize policy dialogues in the context of managing globalization; and undertake trade capacity-building assistance to accord priority to the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, countries with economies in transition and small island developing States.

The report of the Committee on Managing Globalization on its Third Session (Bangkok, 12-14 September, 10-12 October) [E/ESCAP/CMG(3/I) Rep, E/ESCAP/CMG/(3/II)Rep] requested that the secretariat continue its trade facilitation work to fight poverty and achieve the internationally agreed development goals, and called for the expansion of the Asia-Pacific trade and investment agreements database by including analytical indicators and

trade statistics for benchmarking and measuring the trade and development performance of regional and bilateral trade agreements. The secretariat was also asked to develop modalities for regional cooperation mechanisms for supply-side capacity-building, with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as promote the exchange of ideas and cooperation in trade facilitation among member countries, in close cooperation with other international organizations. The Committee underscored the importance of the Ministerial Conference on Transport (Busan, Republic of Korea, 6-11 November), which focused its high-level discussion on major issues related to regional transport infrastructure development and facilitation.

The secretariat was asked to coordinate the regional follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society [YUN 2005, p. 933] and implement its outcome, as well as assist countries in the use of information communication and space technology. The Committee recommended that the Third Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, to be held in 2007, should focus on policy issues to assist Commission members and associate members in the use of space technology and other ICTs for achieving internationally agreed development goals.

In terms of environmental concerns, the Committee, welcoming the publication of the report *State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific 2005*, recommended stronger regional cooperation to address that report's findings. It requested the secretariat to continue supporting member countries in improving their capacity to develop and implement the Clean Development Mechanism and other projects aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In terms of natural disaster reduction, the secretariat should conduct a study reviewing all regional efforts to develop early-warning systems and promote regional cooperation in natural disaster risk management. The Committee supported the proposal for the trans-Asian energy system and asked the secretariat to organize workshops, seminars and consultations with member States to consider the initiative.

Least developed, landlocked and island developing countries

Least developed countries

The Commission, on 12 April [E/2006/39 (res. 62/11)], reaffirmed its commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed

Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 [YUN 2001, p. 770], so that the Asia and Pacific LDCs could attain the internationally agreed development goals. It took note of the regional review of the Programme of Action (Bangkok, 14-15 March) and requested members and associate members to fulfil their commitments contained therein. The Commission recognized the need for coherent results-based national development strategies aimed at poverty reduction, as envisaged in the Programme of Action; and emphasized the need for appropriate strategies and greater political will by the LDCs, as well as continued commitment by their development partners to addressing emerging challenges. It also requested the Executive Secretary to ensure that ESCAP activities took into account the special needs of the LDCs; analyse and disseminate information on their economic and social development for submission to ESCAP thematic committees and intergovernmental committees to promote greater awareness of their concerns; explore with donors the possibility of establishing a fund to support the participation of the LDCs in key ESCAP meetings; and assist them in formulating appropriate development strategies and policies in line with the Programme of Action.

Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries

The Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries, at its eighth session (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 15-16 May) [E/ESCAP/63/18], considered issues relating to inter-country energy cooperation to enhance energy security for sustainable development and widen access to energy services in least developed and landlocked developing countries and international migration and development in those countries. The Special Body noted that the Commission's activities in 2006 for the LDCs were in line with the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, while for the landlocked developing countries they were in line with the Almaty Programme of Action.

To ensure that those countries were able to attain their internationally agreed development goals, the Commission noted the need for a regional road map to ensure the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific: the way forward 2015, adopted in 2005 at the Regional Ministerial Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific [E/ESCAP/1363]; the commitment of adequate resources; and the participation of all stakeholders.

The Commission noted that, in addition to the evaluation of transit trade and transport, the es-

tablishment of economic infrastructure and trade facilitation measures and enhanced regional cooperation between landlocked and transit developing countries were essential for addressing the high transport and logistical costs in landlocked developing countries. It requested the secretariat to facilitate the dissemination of good practices in the diverse areas of development cooperation among least developed, landlocked and small island developing States.

Island developing countries

Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries

The Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries, on its ninth session (Jakarta, Indonesia, 4-5 April) [E/ESCAP/1373], considered issues relating to the creation of employment and income-earning opportunities for vulnerable groups in Pacific island developing countries and the follow-up to the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States [YUN 2005, p. 946] at regional and subregional levels. The Special Body asked Governments in the subregion to address inequities in employment and wealth, noting that experience in many countries had shown that rapid economic growth was not sufficient to generate employment and income-generating opportunities for all, including vulnerable groups, such as women, youth and people with disabilities. Low economic growth, especially when populations were growing at higher rates, meant that employment in the formal sector was unlikely to expand sufficiently to absorb the increase in the labour force in most Pacific countries. Promoting the rights of vulnerable groups and implementing active labour-market programmes were important.

The Commission endorsed the recommendations contained in the report, especially those on the creation of employment and income-earning opportunities for vulnerable groups, follow-up to the Mauritius Strategy and the Commission activities in the Pacific. Specifically, the Commission recommended that the programme of work of the secretariat should mainstream the priorities and commitments of the Mauritius Strategy. It also proposed the establishment of dedicated satellite communications infrastructure in the light of the difficulties of small island developing States, and that a regional review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy be conducted in 2008.

Also before the Commission was a secretariat note [E/ESCAP/1361] entitled "Policy issues for the ESCAP region: strengthening Pacific island develop-

ing countries and territories through regional cooperation", which highlighted the constraints those countries faced in their quest for economic growth and sustainable development. Supporting the 2005 Pacific Plan for strengthening regional cooperation and integration, the report suggested that Pacific island developing States create greater links to the economic dynamism of Asian countries, especially in trade and investment, infrastructure and ICT.

On 12 April [E/2006/39 (res. 62/9)], the Commission reaffirmed its support for the issues identified by the Mauritius Strategy and stressed that the Strategy's successful implementation depended on shared responsibility and strengthened partnerships, including with civil society and the private sector. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to ensure that ESCAP activities took into account the special needs of the small island developing States, as contained in the Mauritius Strategy; review, analyse and disseminate information on economic and social development in those States; provide regional inputs into the final review of the Strategy's implementation; and report to the Commission at its sixty-fourth (2008) session.

Also on 12 April [E/2006/39 (res. 62/12)], the Commission requested that the Executive Secretary take into account the development approach to regionalism and the priorities set out in the Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration in technical cooperation activities for Pacific Island developing countries; undertake research and analysis and provide advice and technical assistance aimed at building the capacity of Pacific island developing countries to benefit from their relations with Asian countries in trade and investment, as well as investigate options for convening a forum in 2007 to share Asian and Pacific experiences in tourism development; and promote the South-South cooperation to help Pacific island countries implement the Mauritius Strategy.

Economic and technical cooperation

In 2006, ESCAP received \$14.5 million for technical cooperation activities [E/ESCAP/63/28], down from \$25.4 million in 2005. Of that amount, \$6.1 million was received from the UN system, and \$6.9 million from donor and participating countries, more than half of which came from developing member countries. Japan, the Republic of Korea and China were the top contributors. In addition to cash contributions, countries provided, on a non-reimbursable basis, a total of 148 work-months of the services of experts in various disciplines.

Transport, communications, tourism and infrastructure development

The Ministerial Conference on Transport (Busan, Republic of Korea, 6–11 November) [E/ESCAP/63/13] adopted the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Phase I (2007–2011). The Conference also adopted the Ministerial Declaration on improving Road Safety in Asia and the Pacific, and supported the establishment of a forum of Asian ministers of transport as a formal regional mechanism to facilitate close collaboration and interaction on emerging issues.

On 12 April [E/2006/39 (res. 62/4)], the Commission adopted the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway network, finalized in 2005 at the intergovernmental meeting convened for that purpose [YUN 2005, p. 1094]. It invited all relevant ESCAP members to become parties to ensure its rapid entry into force, and international and regional financial institutions and multilateral and bilateral donors to consider providing further financial and technical support to develop and operationalize the network. The Commission encouraged landlocked developing countries and their transit neighbours to work together so that the Trans-Asian Railway and Asian Highway networks could provide further tangible transit transport opportunities within the scope of the Almaty Programme of Action [YUN 2003, p. 875]. It also requested the Executive Secretary to assist member countries in becoming parties to the Agreement, accord priority to developing the Railway network within the ESCAP programme of work, collaborate with international and regional financial institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors and international organizations to develop it, and continue to develop an integrated, international, intermodal transport network in Asia and an integrated Euro-Asian transport system.

The Commission, on 12 April [E/2006/39 (res. 62/3)], welcomed the adoption of the Bali Declaration on Sustainable Tourism Development and the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2006–2012), including its Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Tourism Development (2006–2012), adopted by the 2005 High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on Sustainable Tourism Development [YUN 2005, p. 1094]. It invited members and associate members to participate actively in the implementation of the Bali Declaration and Plan of Action, including its Regional Action Programme; identify areas for action to further enhance tourism's contribution to socio-economic development and poverty reduction, using the Bali Declaration and the Plan

of Action as guidelines; appoint a focal point for coordinating implementation of the Plan of Action at the national level; minimize the adverse socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism; promote the Global Code of Ethics on Tourism of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO); support tourism-related local economic activities; and promote women's empowerment and participation in tourism. The Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to accord priority to the secretariat's activities in tourism; encourage implementation of the Regional Action Programme; conduct a regional study on the role of tourism in socio-economic development; enhance the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction, the facilitation of travel and the development of transport and other tourism-related infrastructure. He should also promote regional and subregional cooperation and cooperate with UNWTO and other relevant institutions.

The Commission considered a note by the secretariat entitled "Policy issues for the ESCAP region: enhancing regional cooperation in infrastructure development, including that related to disaster management" [E/ESCAP/1362], which contained the results of a study on the theme of the Commission's sixty-second session (see p. 1155). The study analysed the role of investment and regional cooperation in infrastructure development in the areas of transport, energy, ICT, water and disaster management, noting that adequate investment was necessary to maintain ESCAP strong performance in growth and development. It proposed several options for mobilizing financial resources towards that end: expanding the involvement of the Asian Development Bank in infrastructure financing by refocusing its mandate from development in general to infrastructure development; creating a subsidiary of the Bank exclusively for infrastructure funding; expanding the mandate and scope of the Asian Bond Fund; and setting up a new institution, such as an Asia-Pacific investment bank, for cross-border financial intermediation and lending to public and private infrastructure projects.

During the session, the Commission held a Ministerial Round Table on its theme topic, which summarized the contents of the theme study, and highlighted the importance of infrastructure development in enhancing economic growth and social development and the crucial role of regional cooperation. It also examined regional financial cooperation and featured a presentation by the Executive Secretary on the financial needs of infrastructure development, the resource gap and the options available to bridge that gap.

On 12 April [E/2006/39 (res. 62/2)], the Commission invited members and associate members to implement policies for infrastructure development, taking into account the need to provide high economic and social benefits to poor, rural people; enhance the efficiency and quality of infrastructure facilities and services; implement good public and corporate governance principles throughout the infrastructure development process through transparent legal frameworks for private sector involvement and public procurement systems; create an enabling environment for promoting public-private partnerships; and strengthen national and regional preparedness in disaster risk management and response capability. The Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to enhance regional cooperation in infrastructure development through capacity-building and technical cooperation; forge closer cooperation with UN bodies, development agencies and multilateral financing institutions, as well as donors, to strengthen global partnerships for infrastructure development; and assist members and associate members to develop policy responses for promoting renewable environmentally friendly energy sources, energy efficiency and related infrastructure.

Also before the Commission was the report of the Mekong River Commission [E/ESCAP/63/31]. The Mekong Commission Council approved the 2006–2010 Strategic Plan on water resources development. The plan included an integrated water resources management approach, with emphasis on basin-wide development plans, fuller integration and cooperation with the work of regional development partners and dialogue partners (China and Myanmar). In June, the Council signed the Procedures for the Maintenance of Flows on the Mainstream.

Science and technology

The Commission had before it the report of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology [E/ESCAP/1378 & Corr.1] on its 2005 activities and on the first session of its Governing Council (February 2006) devoted to technology capacity-building, the promotion and management of innovation and subregional and regional networking. To promote and manage innovation, the Centre implemented a project, funded by India, for providing advisory services and organizing expert group meetings for senior policymakers and national workshops for key actors in the innovation system.

The Commission also had before it the report of the Coordinating Committee for Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia [E/ESCAP/1385] on its work for 2005, which focused on en-

hanced coordination of the geoscience programmes of geoscience institutions in member countries, continued human resources development, institutional capacity-building and greater flow of technical information between members and cooperating countries and organizations. The Commission took note of the work of the Committee.

Information and communication technologies

The Commission emphasized the importance of information, communication and space technology (ICST) for sustainable economic and social development, and expressed support for the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society [YUN 2005, p. 1096].

On 12 April [E/2006/39 (res. 62/5)], the Commission invited members and associate members to participate actively in implementing the Summit outcomes, including through the Regional Action Plan. It invited international and regional organizations to cooperate with ESCAP and donor countries and agencies, and NGOs to contribute technical and financial resources for the regional implementation of the Summit outcomes. The Commission welcomed the offer of Malaysia to host the Third Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific in 2007. The Executive Secretary was requested to promote information exchange and best practices at the regional level and facilitate policy debate on the use of ICT for development; organize expert group meetings, in coordination with the International Telecommunication Union and other relevant organizations, to promote capacity-building in developing countries for monitoring the information society; assist member States with technical and relevant information for developing regional strategies and implementing regional conference outcomes focusing on communication technology applications; and build capacity consistent with the Summit outcomes and encourage all stakeholders to transform the digital divide into digital opportunities and bring the benefits of ICT to everyone.

In preparation for the Third Ministerial Conference, the secretariat organized regional consultative meetings to discuss issues of common concern and identify a framework of cooperation in space-based ICT. It also carried out preparatory missions in July and October. National consultations were also held with space agencies and relevant user organizations in Australia, China, Fiji, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and Samoa. The Meeting of Eminent Persons on Information, Communication and Space Technology in Preparation for the Ministerial

Conference (Bangkok, 3-4 August) recommended priority areas, while the third session (part II) of the Committee on Managing Globalization (Bangkok, 10-12 October) recommended focusing on policy issues in the use of space technology and ICTs for achieving internationally agreed development goals.

The twelfth-session of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (Daejeon, Republic of Korea, 17-19 October), held in conjunction with the High-level Expert Group Meeting in Preparation for the Third Ministerial Conference, reviewed the background documents for the Third Ministerial Conference, including the draft ministerial declaration.

Environment and sustainable development

The Commission noted the secretariat's activities relating to environment and sustainable development, especially those relating to implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development [YUN 2002, p. 822] and for achieving the MDGs. The Commission recommended the continuation of activities to promote "green growth", especially technical assistance for capacity-building, and enhanced regional and subregional cooperation. It underscored the need for sustainable and eco-efficient natural resources management and recommended the promotion of initiatives such as the "3 Rs" (reduce, reuse and recycle).

The Commission noted the activities undertaken in the framework of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life", 2005-2015 [YUN 2003, p. 1034], and in preparation for the Fourth World Water Forum, held in Mexico City in 2006.

The Commission emphasized the importance of the secretariat's work in promoting regional and subregional cooperation for the diversification of energy resources, the development of environmentally sound energy technologies and alternative and renewable energy sources, such as microhydro, biogas, biofuel and geothermal, including small-scale projects aimed at poverty reduction. The secretariat was asked to promote the replication of successfully implemented projects in sustainable energy development, such as the initiatives under the ESCAP project on pro-poor public-private partnerships. The Commission highlighted the importance of energy security in achieving sustainable economic growth in the region, and asked the secretariat to facilitate, formulate and implement an integrated trans-Asia energy system aimed at safeguarding the supply of

energy resources to final consumption destinations within the region.

The Commission noted that air pollution in mega-cities was a serious problem, and underlined the importance of continued support to implement the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment [YUN 2000, p. 936], which had successfully addressed urban pollution, and of maintaining the sustainable development of biological resources to further economically develop the region. In that regard, the secretariat was requested to help member countries create a national biological resource centre and act as a focal point for a regional biological resource network to facilitate the transfer of biological resource management technologies.

Agriculture and development

The annual report of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (APCAEM) [E/ESCAP/1379] reviewed the administrative and financial status of the APCAEM work programme in 2005. Financial contributions by China and Finland enabled APCAEM to recruit a new Director, an assistant in information technology and a programme assistant. An expert on non-reimbursable loans, provided by the Republic of Korea, also reported for duty. The realignment of the thematic focus on three core areas, the study on agricultural engineering in support of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [YUN 1997, p. 1048] and nine related project proposals emphasized the Centre's role in achieving its environmental objectives. The report contained the recommendations of the APCAEM Governing Board (November 2005) on the Centre's operations, the medium-term strategy and the 2006-2007 operational workplan. The Board recommended that the current name of the Centre be retained for the next few years, in view of the revised Statute of the Centre adopted in 2005 [YUN 2005, p. 1100].

Social development

The Commission considered a note by the secretariat on progress in addressing persistent and emerging social issues [E/ESCAP/1372], which contained the report of the second session of the Committee on Emerging Social Issues [YUN 2005, p. 1106] and information on progress attained in implementing the Commission's recent resolutions relating to that theme, including resolution 60/1 [YUN 2004, p. 1001] on the Shanghai Declaration.

The Commission noted the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee and affirmed the

importance of the goals in poverty eradication, employment expansion and social integration adopted by the 1995 World Summit for Social Development [YUN 1995, p. 1113]. The Commission emphasized the importance of addressing the issue of youth unemployment, including among rural youth, young people with disabilities and minority youth, and called on the secretariat to provide technical support to help develop and strengthen skills training, social protection and education for youth, as well as national laws and policies on youth.

The Commission called on the secretariat to give greater focus to analysing the family as a changing institution and examining the links between family well-being, effective public policies, social services and intergenerational relationships. The Commission acknowledged the link between migration and economic and social development, and called for strengthened cooperation on migration and on protecting the rights of migrant workers.

Addressing women's issues, the Commission noted the high level of commitment shown by many countries towards ensuring gender equality and recognizing the role of women in development and poverty reduction.

The Commission agreed on the importance of transparency and the exchange of information and technical cooperation at the bilateral, regional and global levels in order to tackle effectively the spread of avian influenza across the region. It requested the secretariat to collaborate with other UN agencies to help member countries create multisectoral capacity for surveillance and a global early warning system against communicable diseases, as well as build stockpiles of vaccines and pharmaceuticals. The secretariat should work with the World Health Organization and other agencies to create capacity in strengthening primary health care and health systems as a means of achieving the MDGs. The Commission stressed the need to tackle communicable diseases in an effective manner, while avoiding duplication of work.

On 12 April [E/2006/39 (res. 62/8)], the Commission noted that a number of ESCAP members had already achieved the goal of universal primary education and many others were on track to doing so within the framework of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade [YUN 2002, p. 1134]. It encouraged those members that had not yet achieved the education goal to devise strategies for reaching the poorest and most marginalized groups and seek alternative formal and non-formal approaches to learning, with a view to achieving the Decade's goals. It invited ESCAP members and associate members, as well as relevant intergovern-

mental and non-governmental organizations, to intensify efforts to implement the International Plan of Action as a central focus of Education for All; invited the international community and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to lend financial and material support to ESCAP members in achieving the Decade's goals; and encouraged them to strengthen their national and professional educational institutions with a view to expanding capacity, developing valid and reliable literacy data and promoting good quality education. The Executive Secretary was asked to assess the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the Decade.

The third session of the Committee on Emerging Social Issues (Bangkok, 12-14 December) [E/ESCAP/CESI(3)/Rep] examined key issues of international migration in the ESCAP region and reviewed ESCAP activities in advance of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (New York, 14-15 September) (see p. 1261), as well as its outcome. During the session, Mongolia sponsored a draft resolution on sustainable health financing toward achieving universal coverage of health care in Asia and the Pacific, which would be submitted at the Commission's sixty-third (2007) session. In that regard, the Committee requested that the secretariat create a forum for sharing experiences and knowledge on the options for strengthening health systems and providing sustainable financing of health care and universal health care coverage. The secretariat was asked to provide technical assistance to integrate health concerns into economic and trade policies and technical expertise to utilize the flexibilities available under current trade regimes, including the TRIPS agreement, in order to protect public health.

The Committee welcomed the proposal to convene in 2008 the mid-point review meeting on implementation of the Plan of Action on Population and Poverty, which was adopted at the Fifth Asian and Pacific Conference on Population and Poverty. The Committee also expressed support for the high-level meeting on the review and appraisal of implementation of the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing [YUN 2002, p. 1194] and the Macao Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific [YUN 1998, p. 942], scheduled for October 2007 in Macao, China, and urged members and associate members to review and appraise national policies and strategies on ageing. The Committee expressed its support for a regional consultation on implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond [YUN 1995, p. 1211], as called for by the General Assembly resolution 60/2

on policies and programmes involving youth [YUN 2005, p. 1296]. The Committee encouraged ESCAP to continue to provide policy assistance to its members and associate members in accordance with the global and regional mandate on disability.

Regarding gender concerns, the Committee welcomed the proposal to convene the next Regional Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action [YUN 2005, p. 1104], and asked the secretariat to formulate a long-term and comprehensive framework for the region in the form of a declaration on gender and development, including emerging challenges and opportunities, and to serve as the regional machinery for gender mainstreaming and a forum for the exchange of good practices and experiences on gender and development.

Natural disasters

The Commission had before it the reports of the Typhoon Committee [E/ESCAP/1387] and the Panel of Tropical Cyclones [E/ESCAP/1388]. The Commission recognized the work of the Typhoon Committee and noted the commitment and support of the Committee's members and donors. It asked the Committee to pursue closer collaboration with intergovernmental bodies. The Commission also noted the work of the Panel on Tropical Cyclones in 2005 under the meteorological, hydrological, natural disaster prevention and preparedness, training and research components of its work programme. The Commission was also informed of the Panel's request to the World Meteorological Organization (wmo) to upgrade the Global Telecommunication System (gts) in some Panel member countries in order to address the requirements for tsunami-related information exchange in the Indian Ocean Rim. It noted that financial support for gts upgrade had been obtained for Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan. Recognizing the importance of tsunami early warning, the Commission requested wmo and ESCAP and international organizations to increase their assistance to the Panel and its members.

The Commission underscored the adverse impact of natural disasters on the economic development and growth of countries in the region. It expressed appreciation for the secretariat's work in enhancing the capacity of member States in disaster management and noted the need to continue activities in disaster management and preparedness. It invited member States to make use of the Multi-Donor Voluntary Trust Fund on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia [YUN 2005, p. 1107] for capacity-building in the development of tsunami early warning systems, as well as to consider contributing to the Fund.

On 12 April [E/2006/39 (res. 62/7)], the Commission emphasized the importance of international cooperation, including South-South cooperation, in planning, implementation, information collection and knowledge sharing in regional tsunami early warning systems. It recognized the important role of the Trust Fund as a means of contributing to the International Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for building and enhancing tsunami early warning capacities at various levels, and for strengthening regional and subregional cooperation and coordination for effective early warning systems for tsunamis. It invited Governments, donor countries, relevant international organizations, international and regional financial institutions, as well as the private sector and civil society, to consider contributing to the Trust Fund, and requested the Executive Secretary to ensure that the Trust Fund was administered efficiently, effectively and transparently.

Also on 12 April, by decision [E/2006/39 (dec. 62/1)], the Commission deferred consideration of the draft resolution submitted by Iran entitled "Establishment of the Asian and Pacific Centre for ICST-enabled Disaster Management" until its sixty-third (2007) session.

Programme and organizational questions

The Commission welcomed the programme performance report for 2004-2005 [E/ESCAP/1374 & Corr.1]. It endorsed the proposed programme changes for the 2006-2007 biennium [E/ESCAP/1375] and noted the adjustments to the programme of work to cope with changing mandates and circumstances. The Commission endorsed the programme overview for the draft strategic framework for the 2008-2009 biennium [E/ESCAP/1376 & Corr.1] for eventual incorporation into the proposed biennial programme. It also provided comments on ESCAP efforts on regional and subregional partnerships to expedite achievement of the MDGs in the region.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Commission considered an overview of ESCAP guidelines for programme monitoring, review and evaluation [E/ESCAP/1377]. The Commission stressed the importance of results-based management and expressed support for related secretariat initiatives, which could help it to focus on organizational learning and the incorporation of lessons learned into future programme and project planning.

ESCAP sixty-third session

In view of the significance of 2007 as the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of ESCAP, the Commission decided to keep open the date and venue of the session for further consideration by ESCAP members that might have an interest in hosting it. In that regard, the secretariat would consult with the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission.

The Commission agreed on "Development of health systems in the context of enhancing economic growth towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific" as the theme topic for its sixty-third session.

UN-Economic Cooperation Organization relations

The Secretary-General, in his consolidated report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other intergovernmental organizations [A/61/256 & Add.1], outlined the UN cooperation with the Economic Cooperation Organization.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 13 November [meeting 52] the General Assembly adopted **resolution 61/12** [draft: A/61/L.8 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 108 (i)].

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 48/2 of 13 October 1993, by which it granted observer status to the Economic Cooperation Organization,

Recalling also its previous resolutions on cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization, in which it invited various specialized agencies as well as other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and relevant international financial institutions to join in the efforts to implement the economic programmes and projects of the Economic Cooperation Organization,

Appreciating the technical and financial assistance extended by the United Nations system and the relevant international and regional organizations to the Economic Cooperation Organization for its economic programmes and projects, and encouraging them to continue their support,

Welcoming the endeavours of the Economic Cooperation Organization to consolidate its ties with the United Nations system and the relevant international and regional organizations for the development and promotion of projects in all priority areas,

Expressing its support for the relevant plans and programmes as well as the institutional changes in the

Economic Cooperation Organization made with a view to achieving internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,

Expressing its grave concern and sympathy over the human casualties caused by the worst natural disasters and their devastating impact on the socio-economic situation in the Economic Cooperation Organization region, which is prone to disasters such as earthquakes, floods and drought,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 59/4 of 22 October 2004, and expresses satisfaction at the mutually beneficial interaction between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization;

2. *Takes note* of the Baku Declaration, adopted at the ninth Economic Cooperation Organization summit, held in Baku on 5 May 2006, which provides guidelines to the Organization in areas such as trade, transportation, energy, agriculture, industry, health and the environment;

3. *Welcomes* the adoption by the Council of Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization at its fifteenth meeting of "eco Vision 2015" as the basic reference document of the Economic Cooperation Organization, in line with the Millennium Development Goals, inter alia, in which the establishment of a free trade area in the region, facilitation of trade and investment information networking, transportation, the promotion of small- and medium-sized enterprises and utilization of new and renewable technologies are highlighted;

4. *Calls for* the strengthening of technical assistance of the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and other trade-related United Nations bodies, such as the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO, to States members of the Economic Cooperation Organization, taking into account the fact that the member States are developing countries and countries with economies in transition, some of which are in the process of becoming members of the World Trade Organization and that their access to world markets and increasing intraregional and inter-regional trade through the implementation of regional trade agreements will boost their efforts to achieve their development goals;

5. *Notes with satisfaction* the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Economic Cooperation Organization Decade of Transport and Communications (1998-2007), which is supported by technical assistance from the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, especially for the elimination of non-physical barriers on main transit-transport routes of the region;

6. *Welcomes* the signing by most States members of the Economic Cooperation Organization of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, which has been launched under the auspices of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and calls upon the member States concerned to

contribute to the operationalization of the project by identifying their priority investment projects;

7. *Expresses its appreciation* for the efforts of the Economic Cooperation Organization in developing a regional energy trade with the cooperation and active participation of subregional and international organizations such as the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank;

8. *Appreciates* that the Regional Programme for Food Security of the Economic Cooperation Organization has been formulated with the technical and financial assistance of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and contributions of the Islamic Development Bank, invites the relevant United Nations bodies, other international organizations and donor agencies to assist the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization in the efficient implementation of the Regional Programme, which contains eleven regional projects and several national projects, and, in this framework, expresses its appreciation for the signing and launching in early 2006 of the Technical Cooperation Programme for Strengthening Seed Supply in the Economic Cooperation Organization Region of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization;

9. *Notes with satisfaction* the enhancement of cooperation between the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the Economic Cooperation Organization, especially in such areas as industrial cooperation strategy, the transfer of technology, plans of action for small- and medium-sized enterprises and standardization, and invites the United Nations Industrial Development Organization to continue contributing to relevant activities and projects of the Economic Cooperation Organization;

10. *Expresses its satisfaction* at the identification of new fields of cooperation within the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organization and at establishing a new directorate of human resource and sustainable development to enhance cooperation on such important issues as health, the alleviation of poverty and human and sustainable development, and recommends that all relevant United Nations bodies, including the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, extend technical and financial support to the Economic Cooperation Organization in its endeavour to enhance cooperation in the above-mentioned areas;

11. *Welcomes* the signing of memorandums of understanding between the Economic Cooperation Organization and the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme, and calls for the effective implementation of the memorandums;

12. *Takes note* of the contribution made by the Drug Coordination Control Unit of the Economic Coopera-

tion Organization in compiling and disseminating drug-related data and in organizing training programmes/courses in the field of drug control for the experts of the member States, with the technical and financial assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the European Union, and invites the donor agencies to assist the Economic Cooperation Organization in funding the projects jointly prepared by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization;

13. *Welcomes* efforts of the Economic Cooperation Organization towards enabling conditions for Afghanistan to assume a more active role in the region in order to benefit from increased trade and export opportunities, and, while taking note of the valuable contribution of the Economic Cooperation Organization in improving the extent and scope of the reintegration of Afghanistan into regional cooperation schemes, appreciates the operationalization of the Special Fund of the Economic Cooperation Organization to finance some priority projects in Afghanistan, and invites the relevant United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, to cooperate with the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization for the successful implementation of its current programmes and projects and the Plan of Action for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Afghanistan, and of a new plan after its expiry in 2007;

14. *Invites* the United Nations system, its relevant bodies and the international community to continue to provide technical assistance, as appropriate, to the States members of the Economic Cooperation Organization in developing and enhancing their early warning systems, preparedness, capacity for timely response and rehabilitation, with a view to reducing human casualties and mitigating the socio-economic impact of natural disasters and infectious diseases;

15. *Takes note with appreciation* of the strides made by the Economic Cooperation Organization in the sphere of external relations, and expresses its desire for the strengthening of the Organization's relations with other international/regional organizations through the establishment of a mechanism to accord it the status of observer/dialogue partner and through the activation of contact groups in the relevant international forums;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

17. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-third session the sub-item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization".

UN-Pacific Islands Forum cooperation

The Secretary-General, in his consolidated report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other intergovernmental organizations [A/61/256 & Add.1], outlined UN coopera-

tion with the Pacific Islands Forum. On 10 April, ESCAP and the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat held the first Pacific Leaders' UN-ESCAP Special Session, which allowed Pacific leaders to highlight their development needs. ESCAP, in collaboration with the Forum and UNDP, initiated a project on the theme "Enhancing Pacific connectivity", which would study ICT applications, including satellite infrastructure in the Pacific. ESCAP worked with the Forum secretariat to assess the adjustment costs that Pacific countries would have to bear as a result of providing greater market access to EU members as part of the Economic Partnership Agreement.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 4 December [meeting 65], the General Assembly adopted **resolution 61/48** [draft: A/61/L.20/Rev.1 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 108 (r)].

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 49/1 of 17 October 1994 and 59/20 of 8 November 2004,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts towards closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum and its associated institutions,

Bearing in mind that the Pacific Islands Forum, established in 1971, promotes regional cooperation and integration among its members through trade, investment, economic development and political and international affairs, to achieve their shared goals of economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security,

Recalling the importance of the internationally agreed development goals set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation") and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States ("Mauritius Strategy for Implementation"),

Taking note of the special circumstances pertaining to the continued presence of radioactive contaminants in certain Pacific Islands Forum nations,

Recalling that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to achieve international cooperation in addressing international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character,

Reaffirming the commitment of leaders at the 2005 World Summit, and bearing in mind the call thereat for a stronger relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations,

Affirming the need to strengthen the cooperation that already exists between entities of the United Nations system and the Pacific Islands Forum in the areas of peace

and security, sustainable development, environmental protection and good governance,

Noting that many Pacific Islands Forum nations depend upon the continued existence of sustainable marine ecosystems,

Welcoming the support and assistance given by the United Nations towards the maintenance of peace and security in the Pacific Islands Forum region,

Taking note of the Communiqué of the Thirty-seventh Pacific Islands Forum, held at Nadi, Fiji, on 24 and 25 October 2006,

Mindful of the need for coordinated and effective utilization of available resources in pursuing the common objectives of the two organizations,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General, in particular part one, section XII, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum, and encourages further such cooperation;

2. *Notes with satisfaction* that regular consultations continue at all levels between the United Nations and the Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum, including participation at the annual consultations between the Secretary-General and heads of regional organizations;

3. *Invites* the Secretary-General of the United Nations to take the necessary measures, in consultation with the Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum, to promote and expand cooperation and coordination between the two secretariats in order to increase the capacity of the organizations to attain their common objectives;

4. *Welcomes* the ongoing work of various international organizations and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in advancing knowledge in the key strategic areas related to governance, security, economic growth, trade and sustainable development, as well as in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in the Pacific island countries;

5. *Recognizes* the challenges that Pacific island countries are facing in combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and in this regard urges the international community, including the United Nations system, to support Pacific island countries in their efforts to implement the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, adopted by the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on 2 June 2006, including the commitment to set, in 2006, ambitious national targets that reflected the urgent need to scale up significantly towards the goal of universal access to comprehensive prevention programmes, treatment, care and support by 2010;

6. *Urges* Governments and all relevant international and regional organizations, the Economic and Social Council, United Nations funds, programmes and regional economic commissions, specialized agencies, international financial institutions and the Global Environment Facility, as well as other intergovernmental organizations and major groups, to take timely actions

to support Pacific island countries in their efforts to ensure the effective implementation of and follow-up to the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation;

7. *Notes* the importance of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted on 8 September 2006, and in this regard calls for the support of the United Nations system and other international partners in assisting Pacific island countries in their efforts to implement it;

8. *Welcomes* the ongoing efforts of the Pacific Islands Forum to promote, primarily through the Regional Security Committee, law enforcement cooperation, the rule of law and regional peace and security, including combating all types of terrorism, in implementing the core United Nations treaties on anti-terrorism, anti-money-laundering, transnational crime and the financing of terrorism;

9. *Requests*, in this regard, that the United Nations continue to assist the Pacific Islands Forum in facilitating among its members the timely implementation of relevant United Nations mandates, and invites States to contribute to the Biketawa Trust Fund, which is administered by the Pacific Islands Forum for confidence-building measures and conflict prevention;

10. *Welcomes* the significant efforts of the Pacific Islands Forum in enhancing peace and security in the region, including through the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands;

11. *Notes with appreciation* the role of the United Nations in the Bougainville peace process in Papua New Guinea and the steady progress being made by the parties;

12. *Welcomes* the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, and calls upon the Secretary-General and other relevant actors to give consideration to using these and other mechanisms to support post-conflict peacebuilding activities, reconstruction and institution-building efforts in Pacific island countries, particularly on the island of Bougainville and in Solomon Islands;

13. *Requests* that the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme, in cooperation with the Pacific Islands Forum, promote joint cooperative needs assessment missions in the region to determine additional support to enhance peacebuilding and reconciliation processes and to complement the activities of regional missions and mechanisms;

14. *Calls upon* the international community to provide, where appropriate, technical and financial support to Pacific island countries in combating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons through, inter alia, the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects;

15. *Notes* the importance of the United Nations field presence in Pacific island countries for enhancing the cooperation with the United Nations system and its

development agencies needed to implement the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation;

16. *Welcomes*, in this regard, the endorsement by the Secretary-General of the establishment of an expanded and joint in-country presence of the United Nations in Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu;

17. *Expresses*, in this regard, its appreciation for the support and cooperation of the Pacific Islands Forum members in fulfilling host-country obligations and other operational modalities;

18. *Notes* the efforts of the United Nations, in cooperation with the Pacific Islands Forum, in respect of considering ways to assist Nauru, and in this regard calls upon the United Nations system to support implementation of the Republic of Nauru preparatory assistance project of the United Nations Development Programme as well as that country's national sustainable development strategy;

19. *Also notes* the participation of Pacific leaders at the special session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific held in Jakarta on 10 April 2006, and takes note of the project "Enhancing Pacific connectivity";

20. *Welcomes* the adoption of the Pacific Plan by Pacific Islands Forum leaders at the Thirty-sixth Pacific Islands Forum, in Madang, Papua New Guinea, during the leaders' Forum Retreat on 26 October 2005, which is aimed at enhancing regional integration and cooperation among its members and cooperation with the international community, including the United Nations system;

21. *Also welcomes* the leadership role of the Pacific Islands Forum in furthering the implementation of the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, particularly in the convening of the negotiations for, and the adoption of, the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean;

22. *Further welcomes* the decision to convene the Pacific regional seminar on decolonization in Nadi, Fiji, from 28 to 30 November 2006;

23. *Urges* the United Nations to support Pacific island countries in pursuing initiatives for enhancing South-South cooperation among themselves and also with other developing countries;

24. *Takes note* of the steps taken by the Pacific Islands Forum to solidify its partnership with non-State actors in the region in promoting governance and sustainable development issues;

25. *Recognizes* the burden placed on small States by growing international reporting requirements, and encourages the investigation of innovative reporting

modalities, including regional reporting, where appropriate;

26. *Calls upon* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide technical support to Pacific Islands Forum members to contribute to the regional efforts in promoting awareness and knowledge of all international human rights treaties and instruments;

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

28. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-third session the sub-item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum".

The General Assembly also had before it the communiqué of the thirty-seventh Pacific Islands Forum (Fiji, 24-25 October) [A/61/558], which included the Nadi decisions on the Pacific Plan on economic growth, sustainable development and good governance, as well as the Declaration on Deep-Sea Bottom Trawling to Protect Biodiversity in the High Seas.

UN-ASEAN cooperation

On 4 December [meeting 65], the General Assembly, having considered UN cooperation with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), as outlined in the Secretary-General's consolidated report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other intergovernmental organizations [A/61/256 & Add.1], adopted **resolution 61/46** [draft: A/61/L.13 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 108 (c)].

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind the aims and purposes of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, as enshrined in the Bangkok Declaration of 8 August 1967, in particular the maintenance of close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes,

Recalling its resolution 59/5 of 22 October 2004 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Association,

Noting with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Association,

Noting with satisfaction that the activities of the Association are consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts that strengthen the cooperation between the United Nations system and the Association,

Welcoming also the participation of the Association in the high-level meetings between the United Nations and regional organizations, as well as the collaboration between the Association and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to promote dialogue and cooperation among regional organizations in Asia and the Pacific,

1. *Welcomes* the holding of the Second Association of Southeast Asian Nations-United Nations Summit at United Nations Headquarters on 13 September 2005, chaired jointly by Prime Minister Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi of Malaysia, the rotating Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Standing Committee and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and attended by the leaders of the Association, as well as the heads of various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes;

2. *Acknowledges* the commitment of the leaders of the Association and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to further broaden cooperation between the Association and the United Nations, in the areas mentioned in the joint communiqué of the Second Association of Southeast Asian Nations-United Nations Summit;

3. *Continues to encourage* both the United Nations and the Association to further strengthen and expand their areas of cooperation;

4. *Welcomes* the Association as an observer in the General Assembly;

5. *Encourages* the United Nations and the Association to convene Association of Southeast Asian Nations-United Nations summits regularly;

6. *Commends* the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Association for their efforts to hold regular meetings, on an annual basis, with the presence of the Secretary-General of the Association, during the regular session of the Assembly, with a view to further strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and the Association;

7. *Takes note* of the efforts of the Association to hold meetings with other regional organizations at the fringes of the sessions of the General Assembly to promote cooperation in support of multilateralism;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

9. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-third session the sub-item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations".

The General Assembly also had before it the joint communiqué of the Second ASEAN-United Nations Summit (New York, 13 September 2005) [A/61/517], which addressed areas of common interest to the two organizations.

Europe

The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), at its sixty-first session (Geneva, 21-23 February) [E/2006/37], considered the economic situation in Europe on the basis of the *Economic Survey of Europe, 2005, No. 2* [Sales No. E.05.II.E.17].

The Commission noted the success of the Second Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development [YUN 2005, p. 1113]. It stated that the assessment of the region's progress in implementing sustainable development commitments in the areas of energy for sustainable development, atmosphere/air pollution, climate change, industrial development and cross-cutting issues had clearly shown the different challenges and experiences of countries in the region. The Commission Chairperson's summary of the Forum [E/ECE/1442] was submitted to the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (New York, 1-12 May) (see p. 982) (conclusion 9). The Commission expressed appreciation for the secretariat note on the promotion of information and communication technology (ICT) application in its work programme and in the ECE secretariat, including e-applications [E/ECE/1443], which provided updated information on the development and use of ICT applications. It emphasized the need to keep ICT issues under review (conclusion 10).

The Commission also discussed ECE technical cooperation activities in 2005 [E/ECE/1441 & Add.1]. It expressed its appreciation for the work of the regional advisers and stressed the need for interlinkages between the Technical Cooperation Unit and the new subprogramme and to discuss further the issue of the ECE technical cooperation strategy at the Executive Committee. The Commission took note of the technical cooperation carried out with subregional groupings and urged the secretariat to reinforce such cooperation. Further, it welcomed the approval of concrete projects and project proposals by the special session of the regional advisory committee of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, and urged members who were also members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development to support the inclusion of the ECE on their list of main international organizations (conclusion 8).

After reviewing Conference Paper 2 on the ECE Strategic Framework for 2008-2009, the report of the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work [E/ECE/1440 & Add.1] and an oral report by the Chair,

the Commission supported the Group of Experts' comments and asked the Executive Secretary to take them into account when finalizing his submission to UN headquarters (conclusion 7).

In the economic context of ECE reform: challenges, policy responses and the ECE role, the Commission took note of the wide range of views raised during the debate on the economic context in which the ECE was operating and urged sectoral committees and the Executive Committee to take them into account.

The Executive Secretary submitted a note on achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs [E/ECE/1438], which reviewed ECE contribution and progress thus far to achieving the goals in the region.

Economic trends

According to the *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2007*, economic growth in Western Europe grew an estimated 2.5 per cent, the fastest growth rate since 2000, and well above potential growth estimates. Growth reached a cyclical peak in the second quarter of 2006, with the euro area recording the strongest performance of all the major developed economies. Growth decelerated in the second half of the year, but remained relatively strong. The brunt of the slowdown was expected to occur in 2007. Growth picked up in Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. Spain, where growth decelerated to just above 3 per cent, continued to have the strongest growth performance.

Growth in the region was anchored by domestic demand, particularly investment expenditure, as well as strong export performance, but net trade made a minimal impact as imports, boosted by the strong domestic demand and appreciated currencies. Exports were expected to decelerate with the slowing of external demand, and the further appreciation of the euro meant that exporters would face difficulties maintaining market share.

In contrast, economic activity in most of the eight new European Union (EU) member States in Central Europe and the Baltic region continued to be dynamic in 2006. Aggregate GDP in the region grew by 5.7 per cent. That reflected a rebound in Poland, record high growth in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and an exceptionally strong performance in the Baltic States.

Vibrant growth prevailed in South-East Europe, with aggregate GDP increasing by some 6 per cent, boosted by the strong upturn in Romania, where GDP growth accelerated by more than 2 percentage points, and buoyant domestic demand. Bulgaria,

Croatia and Romania, the EU accession candidates in the subregion, continued to benefit from rising investor and consumer confidence. Strong GDP growth in Bosnia and Herzegovina suggested that the prolonged period of sluggish recovery might be over. The formal dissolution of the federal State of Serbia and Montenegro (see p. 472) did not have major economic implications, as the two entities had already been performing as separate economies. South-East Europe's short-term outlook was positive, with domestic demand driving growth.

The pace of economic expansion in the Commonwealth of Independent States continued in 2006, reaching 7.5 per cent, up from 6.8 per cent in 2005. That outcome was largely due to higher international prices for oil, gas, metals and cotton, relatively low interest rates in international capital markets and increasing domestic demand throughout the subregion.

Activities in 2006

Trade

The Committee on Trade, at its first session (Geneva, 21-23 June) [ECE/TRADE/C/2006/18], approved: the renewal of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group on Market Surveillance for a further two years; its revised terms of reference; the proposals contained in the document of the Working Party of Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) entitled "WP.6 Vision, Mission, Strategic Directions for 2006-2009 and Work Plan for 2006-2007"; and changes in the UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) 2004-2005 and 2007-2008 programmes of work. The Committee proposed transition procedures in the document entitled "Strengthening agricultural quality standards work in the UNECE: draft transition plan" and requested the secretariat to revise it for submission to the next intersessional meeting. It approved the addition of the outputs from the extrabudgetary project "On-line Russian language resources for WTO negotiations and agreements" to its 2006-2007 programme of work, provided that adequate funding was obtained for its implementation; and decided to use the "Accomplishments Accounts" for evaluating the Committee's work. It also approved the change to the 2006-2007 programme of work [ECE/TRADE/C/2006/14] as modified during the sessions; and its 2008-2009 programme of work [ECE/TRADE/C/2006/12].

The Committee asked its secretariat to publish the proceedings of the Committee's annual International Forum entitled "A Common Regulatory Language for Global Trade" (Geneva, 20-21 June), with a view to disseminating information to interested parties. Having endorsed the document on strengthening itself [ECE/TRADE/C/2006/3], the Committee asked the secretariat, the bureau and its subsidiary bodies to define priorities and corresponding methods to improve communications, as well as implement the evaluation plan for the next three to four years, as reflected in the expected accomplishments and indicators from the strategic frameworks for 2006-2007 and 2008-2009; develop and support capacity-building activities and clearly define a role for itself that was distinct from that of its subsidiary bodies. The Committee adopted its revised terms of reference with agreed changes [ECE/TRADE/C/2006/10].

The Director of the ECE Trade and Timber Division introduced the draft transition plan drawn up by the secretariat, following the request in the ECE Reform Plan [YUN 2005, p. 1114] to strengthen ECE work in agricultural quality standards. The Committee supported it and urged the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) secretariat to comment on the draft text so that a final version could be considered in 2006 by the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables and by the Commission. The Committee, having endorsed the report of the 2005 session of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7), asked the secretariat to prepare for the autumn 2006 Bureau meeting a briefing on the relationship between the Codex Alimentarius and the WP.7. An addendum to the Committee's report [ECE/TRADE/C/2006/18/Add.1] contained the draft transition plan for agricultural quality standards work.

The Committee also decided to hold its second session from 22 to 26 October 2007, and asked the Bureau to develop an improved structure for Committee sessions.

Timber

The Timber Committee, at its sixty-fourth session (Geneva, 3-6 October) [ECE/TIM/2006/8], held a policy forum on "Public procurement policies for wood and paper products and their impact on sustainable forest management and timber markets", in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The forum noted that such policies were developing rapidly and should be monitored regularly, and that coun-

tries should be requested to include the latest developments in that regard in their national markets in 2007 and subsequent years. Having reviewed the market for forest products and considered forecasts for 2006 and 2007, with a focus on how China's forest products trade was reshaping the market, the Committee approved a market statement. It also noted the inadequacy of information on markets for certified forest products and asked the ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics to continue to examine ways to improve the situation. It proposed that the theme for the 2007 policy forum should be "Mobilizing wood resources for raw material, energy or climate change: finding solutions at the policy level".

The Committee also reported on the implementation of ECE reform [ECE/TIM/2006/2], including revised terms of reference, the framework of cooperation with the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) and strengthening the monitoring of policies and institutions.

Taking note of the close cooperation on European forestry issues between ECE, FAO and MCPFE, the Committee welcomed the proposal to organize a European Forest Week in 2008. The Committee agreed to present proposals for cooperation with the Committee on Sustainable Energy. It asked its secretariat to look into the issue related to the Almaty Guidelines on Promoting the Application of the Principles of the Aarhus Convention in International Forums.

The Committee reviewed its 2008 activities and programme of work and evaluations of the 2004-2005 biennium. It agreed to post the discussion paper on "International Forest Sector Institutions and Policy Instruments in Europe: A Source Book" on its website and to update it regularly.

Transport

The sixty-eighth session of the Inland Transport Committee (Geneva, 7-9 February) [ECE/TRANS/166 & Add.1] reviewed, among other topics, intersectoral activities; the transport situation in ECE member countries and emerging development trends; transport and security; assistance to countries with economies in transition; the application status of international ECE transport agreements and conventions; transport trends and economics; road transport; road traffic safety; harmonization of vehicle registration; rail, inland water and intermodal transport and logistics; border crossing facilitation; transport of dangerous goods and perishable foodstuffs; transport statistics; and the Committee's strategic objectives and programme of work.

The Committee adopted a resolution on the implementation of the amendments to the European Agreement on the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport, particularly the introduction of the digital tachograph, and a resolution on the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week, to be held in April 2007.

The Committee adopted the text of the Convention on International Customs Transit Procedures for the Carriage of Goods by Rail under Cover of Senior Management Groups (SMGs) Consignment Notes, as approved by the Working Party in February, and which included amendments required by the UN Office of Legal Affairs for the Secretary-General to become depositary to the Convention. It decided that the Convention would be open for signature in Geneva from 1 June 2006 for a period of one year. The secretariat was entrusted with the verification and preparation of the final text. It also approved the ECE Transport Division's Strategic Framework for 2008-2009.

Energy

The Committee on Sustainable Energy, at its fifteenth session (Geneva, 28-30 November) [ECE/ENERGY/68 & Add.1], discussed implementation of ECE reform; emerging energy security risks; energy for sustainable development; global harmonization of energy reserves and resources technology; regulation and investment in the electric industry; mitigating environmental and social consequences of coal production; natural gas; energy efficiency, import dependence and climate change; and the work of the Regional Adviser on Energy.

On emerging energy security risks and risk mitigation, including the work of the Energy Security Forum, the Committee recommended that it undertake a broadly shared intergovernmental expert dialogue on energy security in data and information sharing and increased transparency; infrastructure investment and financing; legal, regulatory and policy framework; harmonization of standards; research, development and deployment of new technologies; and investment/transit safeguards and burden sharing. It also agreed to seek strategic guidance from ECE on those areas.

The Committee also took note of the report of the December 2005 meeting of its Extended Bureau [ENERGY/2005/6] and reviewed the activities of its subsidiary bodies. It adopted its revised terms of reference and agreed upon its structure, which included the establishment of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Production from Coal and Other Fossil Fuels and the discontinuation of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal in

Sustainable Development, the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Electric Power and the Joint Energy and Environment Task Force on Reforming Energy Prices for Sustainable Energy Development.

Environment

The Committee on Environmental Policy, at its thirteenth session (Geneva, 9-11 October) [ECE/CEP/138], held in-depth discussion on major policy issues including environmental policy and international competitiveness, as well as ECE reform and its implications for the Committee's activities, financial assistance to countries with economies in transition and countries contribution to ECE trust funds and reviewed its 2007-2008 programme of work. The Committee, having considered a paper [ECE/CEP/2006/4 & Add.1] on environmental policy and international competitiveness, invited the secretariat to prepare a revised draft and to produce a second paper on low-income economies in the ECE region. It reviewed the environmental performance of Ukraine and adopted the related recommendations, and approved the outline of a discussion paper to be submitted to the Belgrade Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe". The Committee welcomed the achievements of the working group on environmental monitoring and assessment and favoured strengthening further the monitoring and assessment activities, in particular capacity-building in ECE. It acknowledged progress achieved under ECE multilateral agreements and their protocols and emphasized the importance of strengthening activities related to their implementation.

The Committee adopted its programme of work for 2007-2008, taking into account the evaluation for the 2004-2005 biennium. It approved the updated criteria for financial support, which was annexed to its report.

The fourth session of the Steering Committee for Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (Geneva, 10-11 April) [ECE/AC.21/2006/10], assessed progress made in implementing its work programme and provided guidance for its further implementation. It also discussed preparations for the third High-level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health, to be held in 2008.

The second meeting of the ECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (Geneva, 4-5 December) [ECE/CEP/AC.13/2006/3 & Corr.1] heard reports from countries on the implementation of the ECE strategy for education for sustainable development. It endorsed the "input" and "output" and "outcome" indicators prepared by the Expert Group, which was tasked with

revising them. The Committee stressed the importance of stable and predictable funding for the effective implementation of the strategy and decided to bring the issue of funding to the attention of Ministers at the Belgrade meeting (see below).

The second (Geneva, 29-30 June) [ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/2] and third (Geneva, 12-13 October) [ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/9] meetings of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials for the preparation of the Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" to be held in Belgrade, Serbia, in October 2007, discussed the provisional agenda for the Conference and the preparation of the ministerial declaration and other administrative and procedural matters. Proposals were made regarding the possible elements of the declaration. It was of the view that the declaration should focus on a limited number of issues and address the priority needs of countries beyond the Belgrade Conference and identify appropriate mechanisms for addressing those needs.

Housing and land management

The Committee on Housing and Land Management, at its sixty-seventh session (Geneva, 18-20 September) [ECE/HBP/142 & Add.1], discussed implementation of its work plan on ECE reform; decided that experts on real estate should be integrated into the existing Working Party on Land Administration as observers; and adopted its new terms of reference, as well as those of the Working Party on Land Administration and the Advisory Network. It adopted its programme of work for 2007-2008 and made decisions on its various programme elements, including the outcome of the World Urban Forum (Vancouver, Canada, 19-23 June), country profiles on the housing sector, improvement of urban environmental performance, land registration and land markets and housing modernization and management. Further, it invited its Bureau to help the secretariat formulate expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement when preparing the biennial budget plan.

During the session, Ministers responsible for housing, special planning and land administration discussed social and economic integration through human settlements development, and the multi-family housing sector: ownership, maintenance, renewal and management. They adopted a Ministerial Declaration on Social and Economic Challenges in Distressed Urban Areas in the ECE Region, which reaffirmed the goals and challenges of the ECE Strategy for a Sustainable Quality of Life in Human Settlements in the Twenty-first Century and committed themselves to contributing to social

inclusion through the development of affordable housing, and by further addressing effective management of multi-family housing estates and supporting activities in land administration and spatial planning. It decided to convene the next high-level meeting in 2011 to assess progress in the implementation of those commitments.

The Committee discussed the impact of the provisions of the Declaration on its programme of work and agreed to contribute to its implementation in the next five years, with an emphasis on priority areas such as policy tools for affordable and adequate housing, improving management and maintenance of the multi-family housing stock, functioning spatial planning systems and effective integrated housing and land management policies.

Statistics

The Conference of European Statisticians, at its fifty-fourth session (Paris, 13-15 June) [ECE/CES/70], considered the implications of the meetings of its parent bodies—the February session of ECE and the March session of the UN Statistical Commission (see p. 1465). The Conference decided that its Bureau would review health statistics coordination activities and discuss the need to set up a body to coordinate work on globalization statistics; approved the procedure for preparing and adopting standards, recommendations, handbooks and best practices; approved the strategy for coordinating technical cooperation in the ECE region [ECE/CES/2006/3]; and considered ways to improve international work on crime statistics.

It adopted the Guidelines and Core Principles on Managing Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata Access [ECE/CES/2006/6] and recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing.

During the Conference, seminars were held on population and housing censuses and on human resources and training.

Economic cooperation and integration

The Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration, at its first session (Geneva, 27-28 September) [ECE/CECI/2006/6], adopted its terms of reference [ECE/CECI/2006/2]. It also adopted its 2006-2008 programme of work, and invited international organizations to become active partners in its implementation and the secretariat to establish expert networks in all its thematic areas. The Committee established the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies and the Team of Specialists on Intellectual Property. It de-

cidated to convene its second meeting in December 2007.

The Team of Specialists on Intellectual Property, at its first meeting (Geneva, 23-24 November) [ECE/CECI/IP/2006/1], discussed the challenges countries in the region faced in terms of the commercialization of intellectual property assets, including the importance of public-private partnerships, transfer of technology offices, training centres for intellectual property specialists and greater funding for research and development. It also discussed the challenges faced in protecting and enforcing intellectual property rights (IPR), including its links to public health and safety standards, and the need to make them more consistent across borders. The Team adopted its 2007 programme of work and agreed to hold its next meeting in July 2007, back-to-back with the meeting on IPR protection and transforming research and design into intangible assets in transition economies.

Operational activities

Operational activities, as described in a note by the Executive Secretary [E/ECE/1441], were mostly carried out through capacity-building workshops, seminars, study tours, policy advisory services and field projects. Activities were funded from the UN regular budget and the UN Development Account, together with extrabudgetary resources and ad hoc and in-kind contributions. Of the \$1,376,529 provided by the regular budget, 26 per cent went to industrial restructuring and enterprise development, 15 per cent to sustainable energy, 14 per cent each to statistics and the environment, 13 per cent to transport, 10 per cent to trade development and 7 per cent to management of technical cooperation activities. Extrabudgetary expenditure from ECE general trust funds, local trust funds and other sources totalled \$7,640,165.

Proposals, together with the ECE/ESCAP workplan for 2005-2007 in support of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), were approved at the Special Session of the SPECA Regional Advisory Committee [YUN 2005, p. 1114]. New areas of technical cooperation under SPECA included trade, statistics and ICT.

Programme and organizational questions

ECE reform

The Commission recommended that the Economic and Social Council endorse the ECE

reform [YUN 2005, p. 1114]. It adopted the revised Rules of Procedure for the Commission [E/ECE/1437], and the revised Terms of Reference provisionally, pending their endorsement by the Economic and Social Council. The Commission also adopted the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Executive Committee. The Commission asked the Sectoral Committees to strengthen intersectoral activities and approaches among themselves, in order to promote a more coherent ECE and implement the provisions of ECE reform related to cooperation with other organizations. The Commission also had before it a report of the Ad-Hoc Informal Meeting held on 2 December [E/ECE/1439], which included the Chairperson's concluding remarks on ECE reform at the November 2005 meeting of the Intergovernmental Open-ended Negotiations Committee.

The Commission noted that resolutions on Economic and Social Council Reform and Follow-up to the development outcome of the 2005 World Summit, including the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals, which were being negotiated in New York, would impact ECE work.

Concerning organizational changes in the secretariat, the Commission took note of the new organizational structure presented by the Executive Secretary, slated for implementation before April 2006, and asked the Executive Committee to inform member States of any further measures, particularly regarding staff deployment and mobility.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 27 July [meeting 41], the Economic and Social Council adopted **resolution 2006/38** [draft: E/2006/15/Add.1] without vote [agenda item 10].

Workplan on reform of the Economic Commission for Europe and revised terms of reference of the Commission

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting the adoption by the Economic Commission for Europe, in formal segment, at its meeting of 2 December 2005, of the workplan on reform of the Commission, and noting also the adoption by the Commission, at its sixty-first session, held in Geneva from 21 to 23 February 2006, of its revised rules of procedure,

Noting also the provisional adoption by the Economic Commission for Europe at its sixty-first session of the revised terms of reference of the Commission, pending their endorsement by the Economic and Social Council,

Noting further that the General Assembly, in its resolution 60/248 of 23 December 2005, welcomed the workplan on reform of the Economic Commission for

Europe, decided that the Commission should implement the adopted measures and, to that end, requested the Secretary-General to allocate the requisite resources within section 19, Economic development in Europe, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007,

1. *Endorses* the workplan on reform of the Economic Commission for Europe, as set out in annex I of the present resolution;

2. *Also endorses* the revised terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Europe, as set out in annex II of the present resolution.

Annex I

Workplan on reform of the Economic Commission for Europe

1. Based on the recommendations on the role, mandate and functions of the Economic Commission for Europe as reflected in the report on the state of the Commission, the Commission adopts the following decision:

I. Mission statement

2. The Economic Commission for Europe as a multi-lateral platform facilitates greater economic integration and cooperation among its fifty-five member States and promotes sustainable development and economic prosperity through:

(a) Policy dialogue;

(b) Negotiation of international legal instruments;

(c) Development of regulations and norms;

(d) Exchange and application of best practices as well as economic and technical expertise;

(e) Technical cooperation for countries with economies in transition.

3. The Economic Commission for Europe contributes to enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations through the regional implementation of outcomes of global United Nations conferences and summits.

II. Governance structure

4. The governance structure shall be reformed in order to enhance accountability, transparency and the horizontal coherence of the activities of the organization with a view to enabling the organization to better respond to the needs of its member States.

5. The existing terms of reference and rules of procedure of the Economic Commission for Europe will be amended accordingly.

A. The Commission

6. The Commission is the highest decision-making body of the organization.

7. It is responsible for taking strategic decisions on the programme of work of the Commission and the allocation of resources without prejudice to the competence of the Fifth Committee.

8. It also provides a forum for a policy dialogue at a high level on economic development for the region.

9. The Commission meets once every two years in Geneva as of 2007, taking into account the provisions of rules 1 and 2 of the rules of procedure. At its 2009 session, the Commission will review the reform of the

Commission including the question of frequency of its sessions.

10. The Commission is chaired by the representative of the country elected by the Commission for the period of the biennium. The Chair is assisted by two Vice-Chairs who will be the representatives of two countries elected at the same session.

B. The Executive Committee

11. The implementation of the overall guidance set by the Commission is entrusted to the Executive Committee.

12. Representatives of all States members of the Commission participate in the Executive Committee.

13. The Chairs of the Sectoral Committees—or the Vice-Chairs—are regularly invited to the meetings of the Executive Committee.

14. The Executive Secretary or his representative takes part in the meetings of the Executive Committee.

15. The Executive Committee is presided by a representative of the country that chairs the Commission. The Chairman of the Executive Committee is assisted by two Vice-Chairs elected by the Executive Committee, for a period of one year, the term being renewable.

16. In the period between the biennial sessions of the Commission, the Executive Committee acts on behalf of the Commission and can seize itself of all matters related to Commission activities in conformity with the terms of reference.

17. In particular, the Executive Committee:

(a) Prepares the sessions of the Commission;

(b) Reviews, evaluates and approves in due time the programmes of work of the sectoral committees, including intersectoral activities and relations with other international organizations, based on the criteria that shall be defined by the Executive Committee and that shall include coherence with the overall objective of the Commission, coordination with other subprogrammes and resource implications;

(c) Approves the set-up, renewal, discontinuance, terms of reference and workplans of groups under the Sectoral Committees, based on the criteria of their relevance to the subprogramme, resource implications, and avoidance of duplication and overlap in respect of the activities of the Commission;

(d) Examines with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Sectoral Committees, their report on the implementation of their programme of work and other relevant issues;

(e) Ensures coherence between subprogrammes, inter alia, by encouraging horizontal communication within the organization;

(f) Deals with all matters related to programme planning, administrative and budget issues, including extrabudgetary funding;

(g) Discusses with the Executive Secretary, initiatives taken by the Secretariat and the work undertaken by the Office of the Executive Secretary.

18. The ad hoc informal sessions of the Commission, the Bureau of the Commission, the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work, and the Steering Committee

are hereby discontinued. The governance role formerly filled by these bodies shall be performed by the Executive Committee. The existing monthly briefings by the Secretariat will be replaced by a regular briefing which shall take place as a rule during the meetings of the Executive Committee.

19. The Executive Committee meets when necessary.

20. All decisions are adopted in formal sessions. For formal sessions, interpretation shall be provided and documentation for decision shall be available in all official languages of the Commission. The Executive Committee may also meet in informal mode.

21. The terms of reference and the rules of procedure of the Executive Committee shall be adopted by the Commission.

C. The Sectoral Committees

22. The reference to “Principal subsidiary bodies” is discontinued and replaced by reference to “Sectoral Committees”.

23. Each subprogramme of the programme of work is attributed to a Sectoral Committee.

24. Each Sectoral Committee is responsible for the preparation and implementation of its programme of work under the conditions defined by the Commission and the Executive Committee. The terms of reference of the Sectoral Committees shall be approved by the Commission.

25. The Sectoral Committees are the following:

(a) Committee on Environmental Policy;

(b) Committee on Inland Transport;

(c) Committee on Statistics, further referred to as the Conference of European Statisticians;

(d) Committee on Sustainable Energy;

(e) Committee on Trade;

(f) Committee on Timber;

(g) Committee on Housing and Land Management;

(h) Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration.

26. All Committees shall have reviewed by the end of February 2007:

(a) Their subsidiary intergovernmental bodies in accordance with the guidelines for the establishment and functioning of teams of specialists within the Commission, which shall have been previously reviewed by member States;

(b) Conference servicing needs, with a view to rationalizing them, and shall submit proposals on possible streamlining to the Executive Committee.

27. The Sectoral Committees report once a year and upon request to the Executive Committee, through a meeting with their Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

28. Sectoral Committees will jointly prepare and submit proposals to the Executive Committee on issues and activities of common interest.

D. The Secretariat

29. The Secretariat services the intergovernmental structure entrusted with the implementation of the programme of work.

III. Priorities of the programme of work

30. In order to respond to the actual needs expressed by member States, the programme of work will be re-structured. Elements of the subprogrammes of work that are not mentioned below will be maintained. This reform will be implemented within existing budgetary resources.

A. Environment subprogramme

31. The subprogramme shall increase its focus on:

(a) Member States' implementation of their decisions and commonly agreed goals, including those adopted in the Environment for Europe process, the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia Environment Strategy, and the Commission's environmental conventions;

(b) Strengthening work on environmental performance reviews and environmental monitoring and assessment, which lays the necessary foundation for evaluating environmental protection and the implementation of these decisions.

32. Greater efforts shall be directed towards the implementation of the Commission's environmental programme, notably through further capacity-building and workshops at subregional levels.

33. The Committee on Environmental Policy shall study ways and means to strengthen cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme and all other relevant United Nations institutions and international organizations in order to optimize the implementation of the programme of work in the region and shall submit proposals to the Executive Committee.

34. The Committee on Environmental Policy shall, in cooperation with the Committee on Inland Transport and in consultation with the World Health Organization, strengthen activities relating to: (a) the Transport, Health and Environment Pan European Programme, including sustainable financing and staffing for the clearing house; and (b) environmental aspects of transportation, and submit proposals thereon to the Executive Committee.

B. Transport subprogramme

35. The Committee on Inland Transport shall strengthen activities in the fields of border-crossing and trade facilitation in cooperation with the Committee on Trade and submit proposals thereon to the Executive Committee.

36. The Committee on Inland Transport shall, in cooperation with the Committee on Environmental Policy and in consultation with the World Health Organization, strengthen activities relating to: (a) the Transport, Health and Environment Pan European Programme, including sustainable financing and staffing for the clearing house; and (b) environmental aspects of transportation, and submit proposals thereon to the Executive Committee.

37. The Committee on Inland Transport shall submit proposals to the Executive Committee on ways and means of monitoring and strengthening the implementa-

tion of the Commission's key legal instruments on transport, including on road safety.

38. The Committee on Inland Transport shall submit proposals to the Executive Committee on ways and means to strengthen Euro-Asia transport links.

39. The Committee on Inland Transport shall submit proposals to the Executive Committee on ways and means:

(a) To strengthen the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention);

(b) To improve transparency in managing the TIR Convention.

C. Subprogramme on statistics

40. The coordination of international statistical work, methodological work and technical cooperation activities shall be strengthened.

41. In order to provide member States with user-oriented statistics, the Conference of European Statisticians shall submit proposals to the Executive Committee on the actual production of statistics of member States. The contents of the online database shall be reviewed and improved accordingly.

42. The functioning and accessibility of the online database shall be improved in order to facilitate the dissemination of statistics.

43. The publication of "Trends" is discontinued. The production of other publications shall be reviewed by the Conference of European Statisticians which will submit proposals to the Executive Committee.

44. The resources allocated to the processing of data by this subprogramme shall be reduced owing to the overall reduction of activities in the field of economic analysis.

D. Subprogramme on economic cooperation and integration

45. This subprogramme will address key aspects of economic development and integration and focus mainly on countries with economies in transition in order to:

(a) Deliver policy advice;

(b) Facilitate policy dialogue, and exchange of experience and best practices;

(c) Develop guidelines.

46. To this extent, the subprogramme will deal with:

(a) Application of experience gained, lessons learned and best practices conducive to economic growth and innovative development. This work shall be demand-driven and focused on specific topics and may be entrusted by the Committee to external experts and relevant organizations and institutions, in particular those from countries with economies in transition. The initial list to be considered by the Committee may include such issues as:

(i) Promoting effective public investment and regulatory policies;

(ii) Strengthening the competitiveness of the economy through innovative development;

(iii) Development of financial systems and services;

- (iv) Application and adaptation of economic analysis;
- (b) Elaboration of recommendations aimed at creating a policy, financial and regulatory environment conducive to economic development, investment and innovation through:
 - (i) Creation and development of enterprises and entrepreneurship;
 - (ii) Promotion of knowledge-based economies and innovation;
 - (iii) Promotion of an effective system of protection of intellectual property rights;
 - (iv) Promotion of corporate governance, rule of law and public-private partnerships through the improvement of transparency and investor confidence, including the establishment of guidelines thereto;
- (c) Definition by the Sectoral Committee of the modalities of the integration of existing activities in the new subprogramme, with a view to continuing valuable work in the areas mentioned above, with the Sectoral Committee reporting to the Executive Committee.

47. Networks of experts, advisers and decision-makers shall be set up in order to provide a platform for exchange of national policy experiences and development of standards and best models on these matters.

48. The activities of this subprogramme shall build, inter alia, on the results of the work carried out by other relevant organizations and institutions operating in this field, including United Nations organizations, with which synergies should be improved.

49. Based on the overall framework above, member States shall approve the strategic framework no later than end of March 2006, and the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration shall submit proposals on its terms of reference and programme of work to the Executive Committee for approval as soon as possible and, at the latest, within one year from the date of the adoption of the present decision.

50. The Executive Committee will review the subprogramme on economic cooperation and integration no later than three years from the date of the adoption of the present decision with a view to assessing whether the level of resources is appropriate and optimizing the programme if necessary.

51. A regional adviser shall be allocated to this subprogramme.

E. Subprogramme on sustainable energy

52. The Committee on Sustainable Energy shall streamline its activities and improve cooperation with other relevant institutions, in particular the International Energy Agency and the Energy Charter process. This cooperation could take the form of joint activities, memorandums of understanding, and participation of members of other relevant organizations in the activities of the subprogramme and vice versa.

53. The Committee on Sustainable Energy shall strengthen activities in the fields of energy efficiency, cleaner energy production, energy security and diversification of energy sources, taking into account environ-

mental concerns. Special attention should be given to cooperation with the Committee on Environmental Policy, the Committee on Inland Transport and the Committee on Timber.

F. Trade development subprogramme

54. Activities in the field of trade facilitation shall continue and focus on supporting the development of standards carried out by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business.

55. The Committee on Trade shall review the programme on regulatory cooperation and standardization policies.

56. The activities in the field of agricultural quality standards shall be strengthened. Consultations shall be initiated with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in order to concentrate the activities of the two organizations within the Economic Commission for Europe.

57. The Sectoral Committee is renamed the "Committee on Trade".

58. The subprogramme is renamed the "Trade subprogramme".

G. Timber subprogramme

59. The Committee on Timber shall submit proposals to the Executive Committee on the development of increased cooperation between the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe and the Commission, and shall explore the possibility of a formal framework for this cooperation.

60. The Committee on Timber shall submit proposals to the Executive Committee on ways and means to strengthen its monitoring and analysis activities relating to forest policy and institutions.

61. The subprogramme is renamed the "Subprogramme on timber and forestry".

H. Human settlements subprogramme

62. The following programme elements are discontinued:

- (a) Development of human settlements statistics;
- (b) Major trends characterizing human settlements development.

63. The activities and related resources in the field of real estate (currently carried out under the Industrial restructuring and enterprise development subprogramme) shall be integrated in the subprogramme. The Sectoral Committee shall submit proposals to the Executive Committee on the modalities of this integration.

64. The activities and related resources in the field of population (currently carried out under the Economic analysis subprogramme) shall be integrated in the subprogramme.

65. The subprogramme is renamed the "Subprogramme on housing, land management and population".

66. The Sectoral Committee is renamed the "Committee on Housing and Land Management".

67. The intergovernmental governance of population activities shall be assured by the Executive Committee.

I. Economic analysis and industrial restructuring and enterprise development subprogrammes

68. These subprogrammes as well as the related inter-governmental structures will be discontinued.

IV. Technical cooperation

69. Technical cooperation, which forms an integral part of the Commission's activities, has to focus on the countries with economies in transition and has to be demand-driven.

70. The Commission's technical cooperation shall concentrate on the sectors where the Commission has in-house expertise and comparative advantage over other organizations. It should be coherent with and support the implementation of the agreed work programmes.

71. The coordination of the Commission's technical cooperation shall be ensured by the Technical Cooperation Unit reporting directly to the Executive Secretary with appropriate resources for carrying out its functions.

72. The intergovernmental governance of technical cooperation shall be assured by the Executive Committee.

73. The impact of the Technical Cooperation Strategy, endorsed by the Commission at its annual session of 2004, shall be assessed by the Executive Committee and the Strategy will be reviewed if necessary.

74. Member States shall review, no later than two months after the adoption of this decision, the resource allocation among subprogrammes concerning the regular programme of technical cooperation (section 23 of the regular budget) as foreseen in the decision related to this subject.

75. The use of the Commission's regional advisers shall be strengthened by enabling their participation in capacity-building activities.

76. Evaluations of separate subprogrammes' technical cooperation activities shall be conducted on a regular basis. A common policy and practice for these evaluations shall be implemented.

V. Cross-sectoral issues

A. Millennium Development Goals

77. In order to contribute to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the Commission shall:

(a) Offer a platform to all stakeholders for sharing their information, views and experience, and for improving the coordination of these activities;

(b) Set up and maintain a database on Millennium Development Goal indicators using the database and dissemination infrastructure of the statistical subprogramme.

78. The Commission shall cooperate with the United Nations Development Programme to this extent and within existing resources.

B. Gender issues

79. The Commission shall pay particular attention to the gender dimension of development, as a priority cross-cutting theme, by identifying good practices

in further mainstreaming gender issues in its various subprogrammes and activities, taking into account the economic areas addressed by the regional review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This should apply across both regular and operational activities.

C. The private sector and non-governmental organizations

80. The Sectoral Committees shall review and report to the Executive Committee on the involvement of the private sector and non-governmental organizations, in order to strengthen and further improve their relationship and to increase resources and contributions of expertise with a view to optimizing the implementation of the programme of work.

VI. Relations with other organizations

81. In order to increase the impact of its work, the Commission shall reinforce its cooperation with key international organizations and institutions in all relevant areas of its work.

82. In particular, regular consultation shall be fostered with other pan-European organizations.

83. In addition to the specific cooperations identified under the different subprogrammes, the cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme should be strengthened. The Secretariat shall explore ways and means to improve the synergy between the organization and the Programme.

84. The Economic Commission for Europe shall seek to reinforce partnerships with other United Nations regional commissions, in particular the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. The Secretariat shall assess the possibilities for strengthening the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia.

85. The Secretariat shall keep member States informed of these proceedings through the Executive Committee.

86. The implementation of the memorandum of understanding with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is entrusted to the Office of the Executive Secretary and the Executive Committee shall monitor this implementation.

87. After consultations with other organizations and upon the recommendation of the Secretariat, the Executive Committee shall decide on the opportunity for the Commission's engagement in the development of an early warning mechanism.

VII. Management

A. Coordination tasks

88. The Office of the Executive Secretary is entrusted with:

(a) The follow-up of the implementation of horizontal and sectoral issues arising from the relevant multi-lateral commitments such as those made at the General

Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and United Nations global conferences and summits, as well as the provision of inputs required by these global bodies and by the Secretary-General;

(b) The coordination of intersectoral and cross-sectoral activities;

(c) The coordination of Commission inputs into the monitoring of implementation of the commitments of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in the fields of economics and the environment;

(d) Reporting to the Executive Committee on the progress in the implementation of any follow-up of agreed measures.

B. Programme planning and budget

89. The Commission shall strengthen its programme planning, monitoring and evaluation resources and improve the training of its managers in the application of pertinent skills.

90. A dedicated unit for planning, monitoring and evaluation shall be established and attached to the Office of the Executive Secretary in order to secure the continuous involvement of senior management.

91. To facilitate the assessment of programme performance:

(a) The strategic framework (biennial programme plan) will be consolidated with the programme budget narratives in order to emphasize the linkage between expected accomplishments and outputs financed by the regular budget and extrabudgetary funds;

(b) In its reporting to the Executive Committee, the Secretariat shall provide, in a user-friendly format, complete information about the allocation of resources from the regular budget and of extrabudgetary resources to the subprogrammes and programme items within their respective programmes of work.

92. The Sectoral Committees together with the Secretariat will take into account the results of the assessment and evaluations when preparing the strategic frameworks for their respective subprogrammes and, subsequently, the programme narratives.

93. The Secretariat shall provide information to the Executive Committee on cost implications for any programmatic changes proposed for the next biennium during the preparatory process of the programme budget.

94. Any change in resources (both regular and extrabudgetary) materializing after the adoption of the programme budget by the General Assembly shall be presented to the Executive Committee for approval.

C. Monitoring and evaluation, including reporting on performance

95. The Sectoral Committees shall provide complete information concerning the allocation of resources according to programme items within the programme of work of their respective subprogrammes.

96. The Executive Committee shall examine the advisability of developing "downstream" indicators with the

Secretariat so as to better reflect actual accomplishments of the Commission, in particular relating to the use and relevance of the Commission's soft legislation tools, norms and standards.

97. The Commission shall develop and streamline its evaluation functions and practices in conformity with the relevant decision of the Commission and in compliance with the instructions of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. This also applies to technical cooperation activities.

D. Human resources

98. The Executive Secretary shall:

(a) Improve communication, coordination and cooperation across the divisions and subprogrammes;

(b) Promote, through human resources management, staff mobility and skill enhancement in order to ensure that staff members periodically change divisions and subprogrammes, and encourage staff members to gain experience in other United Nations and international organizations, as well as in the field.

99. The Secretariat shall provide systematic programme planning, monitoring and evaluation training to its programme managers, in particular in cooperation with the Management Consulting Section of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Priority will be given to such training in the training budget allocated to the Commission.

100. The Secretariat shall analyse the merits of using the United Nations Office for Project Services for the implementation of its extrabudgetary projects and will present suggestions to the Executive Committee.

E. Public relations, communication and corporate image

101. To improve its own corporate image and to attract more attention to its achievements, the Secretariat shall enhance its communications, public relations and contacts with the media by making more and better-targeted materials and publications available on the Internet in all official languages of the Commission and producing appropriate printed materials in quantities that correspond to actual demand.

102. To improve its communication with member States the Secretariat shall update, in consultation with member States, the lists of its contacts in government agencies and among governmental experts and address its communications at the appropriate level and through transparent channels.

VIII. Resources

103. The redeployment shall be implemented within existing resources.

104. The abolition of the subprogrammes on Economic analysis (excluding the Population Activities Unit) and industrial restructuring and enterprise development will free:

(a) One D and 12 P posts from Economic analysis;

(b) Four P posts from industrial restructuring and enterprise development;

(c) Two P posts from statistics (owing to the reduction of activities related to Economic analysis); for a total of one D and 18 P posts.

105. These posts are redeployed to strengthen other subprogrammes/entities. The redeployments, with their justification given through reference to the relevant paragraph(s) of the present annex, are as follows:

(a) Environment: two P posts (paragraphs 31, 32, 34 and 53);

(b) Transport: two P posts (paragraphs 35-39 and 53);

(c) Statistics: one P post (paragraphs 40-42 and 77);

(d) Economic cooperation and integration: one D and eight P posts (paragraphs 45-51);

(e) Sustainable energy: one P post (paragraph 53);

(f) Trade development: one P post (paragraphs 35 and 56);

(g) Timber: one P post (paragraphs 53, 59 and 60);

(h) Office of the Executive Secretary and information activities: two P posts (paragraphs 86, 89-94, 97 and 101);

for a total of one D and 18 P posts.

Annex II

Draft revised terms of reference and rules of procedure of the Economic Commission for Europe

Terms of reference

1. The Economic Commission for Europe, acting within the framework of the policies of the United Nations and subject to the general supervision of the Economic and Social Council shall, provided that the Commission takes no action in respect of any country without the agreement of the Government of that country:

(a) Initiate and participate in measures for facilitating concerted action for the economic development and integration of Europe, for raising the level of European economic activity, and for maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of the European countries both among themselves and with other countries of the world;

(b) Make or sponsor such investigations and studies of economic and technological problems of and developments within member countries of the Commission and within Europe generally as the Commission deems appropriate;

(c) Undertake or sponsor the collection, evaluation and dissemination of such economic, technological and statistical information as the Commission deems appropriate.

2. Cancelled.

3. Cancelled.

4. The Commission is empowered to make recommendations on any matter within its competence directly

to its member Governments, Governments admitted in a consultative capacity under paragraph 8 below, and the specialized agencies concerned. The Commission shall submit for the prior consideration of the Economic and Social Council any of its proposals for activities that would have important effects on the economy of the world as a whole.

5. The Commission may, after discussion with any specialized agency functioning in the same general field and with the approval of the Economic and Social Council, establish such subsidiary bodies as it deems appropriate for facilitating the carrying out of its responsibilities.

6. The Commission shall submit to the Economic and Social Council a full report on its activities and plans, including those of any subsidiary bodies, once a year, and shall make interim reports at each regular session of the Council.

7. A complete list of countries members of the Economic Commission for Europe is contained in the appendix to the present annex.

8. The Commission may admit, in a consultative capacity, European nations that are not States Members of the United Nations, and shall determine the conditions under which they may participate in its work, including the question of voting rights in the subsidiary bodies of the Commission.

9. Cancelled.

10. Cancelled.

11. The Commission shall invite any State Member of the United Nations not a member of the Commission to participate in a consultative capacity in its consideration of any matter of particular concern to that non-member.

12. The Commission shall invite representatives of specialized agencies and may invite representatives of any intergovernmental organizations to participate in a consultative capacity in its consideration of any matter of particular concern to that agency or organization, following the practices of the Economic and Social Council.

13. The Commission shall make arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations that have been granted consultative status by the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with the principles approved by the Council for this purpose and contained in Council resolution 1296(XLIV) of 23 May 1968, parts I and II.14.

14. The Commission shall take measures to ensure that the necessary liaison is maintained with other organs of the United Nations and with the specialized agencies.

15. The Commission shall adopt its own rules of procedure, including the method of selecting its Chairman.

16. The administrative budget of the Commission shall be financed from the funds of the United Nations.

17. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall appoint the staff of the Commission, which shall form part of the United Nations Secretariat.

18. The headquarters of the Commission shall be located at the seat of the European Office of the United Nations.

19. Cancelled.

20. The Economic and Social Council shall, from time to time, undertake special reviews of the work of the Commission.

Rules of procedure

Chapter I Sessions

Rule 1

Sessions of the Commission shall be held:

(a) On dates fixed by the Commission, after consultation with the Executive Secretary, at previous meetings;

(b) Within thirty days of the communication of a request to that effect by the Economic and Social Council;

(c) At the request of the majority of the members of the Commission, after consultation with the Executive Secretary;

(d) On such other occasions as the Chairperson, in consultation with the Vice-Chairpersons and the Executive Secretary, deems necessary.

Rule 2

Sessions shall ordinarily be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Commission may, with the concurrence of the Secretary-General, decide to hold a particular session elsewhere.

Rule 3

The Executive Secretary shall, at least forty-two days before the commencement of a session of the Commission, distribute a notice of the opening date of the session, together with a copy of the provisional agenda. The basic documents relating to each item appearing in the provisional agenda of a session shall be transmitted not less than forty-two days before the opening of the session, with the provision that, in exceptional cases, the Executive Secretary may, for reasons to be stated in writing, transmit such documents not less than twenty-one days before the opening of the session.

Rule 4

The Commission shall invite any State Member of the United Nations not a member of the Commission to participate in a consultative capacity in its consideration of any matter of particular concern to that State.

Chapter II Agenda

Rule 5

The provisional agenda for each session shall be drawn up by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the Chairperson, the two Vice-Chairpersons and the Executive Committee.

Rule 6

The provisional agenda for any session shall include:

(a) Items arising from previous sessions of the Commission;

(b) Items proposed by the Economic and Social Council;

(c) Items proposed by any member of the Commission;

(d) Items proposed by a specialized agency in accordance with the agreements of relationship concluded between the United Nations and such agencies;

(e) Any other items that the Chairperson or the Executive Secretary sees fit to include.

Rule 7

The first item in the provisional agenda for each session shall be the adoption of the agenda.

Rule 8

The Commission may amend the agenda at any time.

Chapter III Representation and credentials

Rule 9

Each member shall be represented on the Commission by an accredited representative.

Rule 10

A representative may be accompanied to the sessions of the Commission by alternate representatives and advisers and, when absent, he may be replaced by an alternate representative.

Rule 11

The credentials of each representative appointed to the Commission, together with a designation of alternate representatives, shall be submitted to the Executive Secretary without delay.

Chapter IV Officers

Rule 12

The Commission shall, at each biennial session, elect a country from among its members to hold the chair for the period of the biennium. The representative of the elected country will be the Chairperson. The Commission will also, at the same meeting, elect two countries whose representatives will become the Vice-Chairpersons for the period of the biennium.

Rule 13

If the Chairperson is absent from a meeting, or any part thereof, one of the Vice-Chairpersons, designated by the Chairperson, shall preside.

Rule 14

If the representative of the country holding the position of Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Commission ceases to represent his or her country, the new representative of that country shall become the new Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson for the unexpired portion of the term. If the representative of the country holding the position of Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson is so incapacitated that he or she can no longer hold office, the alternate rep-

representative shall become the new Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson for the unexpired portion of the term.

Rule 15

The Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson.

Rule 16

The Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall participate in the meetings of the Commission as such and not as the representative of the member by whom he or she was accredited. The Commission shall admit an alternate representative to represent that member in the meetings of the Commission and to exercise its right to vote.

Chapter V

Intersessional committee (Executive Committee)

Rule 17

The Commission shall adopt the terms of reference and the rules of procedure of its intersessional governing committee (Executive Committee) and may amend these when necessary. The Commission provides general guidance to the Executive Committee.

Chapter VI

Subsidiary bodies other than the intersessional committee

Rule 18

After discussion with any specialized agency functioning in the same general field, and with the approval of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission may establish such continuously acting subcommissions or other subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions and shall define the powers and composition of each of them. Such autonomy as may be necessary for the effective discharge of the technical responsibilities laid upon them may be delegated to them.

Rule 19

The Commission may establish or discontinue such committees and subcommittees as it deems necessary to assist it in carrying out its tasks.

Rule 20

Subsidiary bodies shall adopt their own rules of procedure unless otherwise decided by the Commission.

Rule 21

Subsidiary bodies should, as in rules 52 and 53, consult those non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council that, because of their importance as regards their activity and the number of their members in Europe, play a part in the economic life of Europe, on questions within the competence of the Commission and deemed of interest to such organizations. These organizations could in appropriate cases be invited to be represented at meetings of subsidiary bodies.

Chapter VII

Secretariat

Rule 22

The Executive Secretary shall act in that capacity at all meetings of the Commission and of its subsidiary bodies. He or she may appoint another member of the staff to take his or her place at any meeting.

Rule 23

The Executive Secretary or his or her representative may at any meeting make either oral or written statements concerning any question under consideration.

Rule 24

The Executive Secretary shall direct the staff provided by the Secretary-General and required by the Commission, and its subsidiary bodies.

Rule 25

The Executive Secretary shall be responsible for the necessary arrangements being made for meetings.

Rule 26

The Executive Secretary, in carrying out his or her functions, shall act on behalf of the Secretary-General.

Chapter VIII

Conduct of business

Rule 27

A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum.

Rule 28

In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him or her elsewhere by these rules, the Chairperson shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the Commission, shall direct the discussion, shall ensure the observance of these rules, and shall accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote, and announce decisions. The Chairperson may also call a speaker to order if his or her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

Rule 29

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may raise a point of order. In this case the Chairperson shall immediately state his or her ruling. If it is challenged, the Chairperson shall forthwith submit his or her ruling to the Commission for decision and it shall stand, unless overruled.

Rule 30

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate. Any such motion shall have priority. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one representative shall be allowed to speak in favour of, and one representative against, the motion.

Rule 31

A representative may at any time move the closure of the debate whether or not any other representative has signified his or her wish to speak. Not more than two representatives may be granted permission to speak against the closure.

Rule 32

The Chairperson shall take the sense of the Commission on a motion for closure. If the Commission is in favour of the closure, the Chairperson shall declare the debate closed.

Rule 33

The Commission may limit the time allowed to each speaker.

Rule 34

Principal motions and resolutions shall be put to the vote in the order of their submission, unless the Commission decides otherwise.

Rule 35

When an amendment revises, adds to or deletes from a proposal, the amendment shall be put to the vote first, and if it is adopted, the amended proposal shall then be put to the vote.

Rule 36

If two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the Commission shall vote first on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, then, if necessary, on the amendment next furthest removed, and so on, until all the amendments have been put to the vote.

Rule 37

The Commission may, at the request of a representative, decide to put a motion or proposal to the vote in parts. If this is done, the text resulting from the series of votes shall be put to the vote as a whole.

Chapter IX
Voting**Rule 38**

Each member of the Commission shall have one vote.

Rule 39

Decisions of the Commission shall be made by a majority of the members present and voting.

Rule 40

The Commission shall take no action in respect of any country without the agreement of the Government of that country.

Rule 41

The Commission shall normally vote by show of hands. If any representative requests a roll-call, a roll-call shall be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the members.

Rule 42

All elections shall be decided by secret ballot, unless, in the absence of any objection, the Commission decides to proceed without taking a ballot on an agreed candidate or slate.

Rule 43

If a vote is equally divided upon matters other than elections, a second vote shall be taken. If this vote also results in equality, the proposal shall be regarded as rejected.

Chapter X
Languages**Rule 44**

English, French and Russian shall be the working languages of the Commission.

Rule 45

Interventions made in any of the working languages shall be interpreted into the other working languages.

Chapter XI
Records**Rule 46**

Suspended.

Rule 47

Suspended.

Rule 48

Suspended.

Rule 49

As soon as possible, the text of all reports, resolutions, recommendations and other formal decisions taken by the Commission and its subsidiary bodies shall be communicated to the members of the Commission, to the consultative members concerned, to all other States Members of the United Nations and to the specialized agencies.

Chapter XII
Publicity of meetings**Rule 50**

The meetings of the Commission shall ordinarily be held in public. The Commission may decide that a particular meeting or particular meetings shall be held in private.

Chapter XIII
Consultation with specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency**Rule 51**

(a) Where an item proposed for the provisional agenda for a session contains a proposal for new activities to be undertaken by the United Nations relating to matters that are of direct concern to one or more specialized agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Executive Secretary shall enter into consultation with the agency or agencies concerned and report to the Commission on the means of achieving coordinated use of the resources of the respective agencies.

(b) Where a proposal put forward in the course of a meeting for new activities to be undertaken by the United Nations relates to matters that are of direct concern to one or more specialized agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Executive Secretary shall, after such consultation as may be possible with the representatives

at the meeting of the other agency or agencies concerned, draw the attention of the meeting to these implications of the proposal.

(c) Before deciding on proposals referred to above, the Commission shall satisfy itself that adequate consultations have taken place with the agencies concerned.

Chapter XIV

Relations with non-governmental organizations

Rule 52

Non-governmental organizations in general or in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council may designate authorized representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the Commission. Organizations on the Roster may have representatives present at such meetings as are concerned with matters within their field of competence. Non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Council may circulate to the members of the Commission written statements and suggestions on matters within their competence. Non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Council or on the Roster may submit such statements and suggestions to the Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary shall prepare and distribute at each session of the Commission a list of such communications received, briefly indicating the substance of each of them. Upon the request of any member of the Commission, the Executive Secretary shall reproduce in full and distribute any such communication.

Rule 53

The Commission at its discretion may consult with non-governmental organizations in general or in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or on the Roster on matters concerning which the Commission regards these organizations as having special competence or knowledge. Such consultations may be arranged at the invitation of the Commission or at the request of the organization. In the case of non-governmental organizations in general consultative status, consultations should normally be held with the Commission itself. In the case of non-governmental organizations in special consultative status or on the Roster, consultations might be effected either directly or through ad hoc committees.

Chapter XV

Reports

Rule 54

The Commission shall submit to the Economic and Social Council a full report on its activities and plans, including those of any subsidiary bodies, once a year, and shall make interim reports at each regular session of the Council.

Chapter XVI

Amendments and suspensions

Rule 55

Any of these rules of procedure may be amended or suspended by the Commission provided that the pro-

posed amendments or suspensions do not attempt to set aside the terms of reference laid down by the Economic and Social Council.

Appendix

List of countries members of the Economic Commission for Europe

(as at 9 January 2006)

Albania	Luxembourg
Andorra	Malta
Armenia	Monaco
Austria	Netherlands
Azerbaijan	Norway
Belarus	Poland
Belgium	Portugal
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Republic of Moldova
Bulgaria	Romania
Canada	Russian Federation
Croatia	San Marino
Czech Republic	Serbia
Denmark	Slovakia
Estonia	Slovenia
Finland	Spain
France	Sweden
Georgia	Switzerland
Germany	Tajikistan
Greece	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Hungary	Turkey
Iceland	Turkmenistan
Ireland	Ukraine
Israel	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Italy	United States of America
Kazakhstan	Uzbekistan
Kyrgyzstan	
Latvia	
Liechtenstein	
Lithuania	

Regional cooperation

The Secretary-General's consolidated report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other intergovernmental organizations [A/61/256] outlined UN cooperation with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 20 October [meeting 39], the General Assembly adopted **resolution 61/4** [draft: A/61/L.4 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 108 (d)].

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 54/5 of 8 October 1999, by which it granted observer status to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, as well as its resolutions 55/211 of 20 December 2000, 57/34 of 21 November 2002 and 59/259 of 23 December 2004, on cooperation

between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization,

Recalling also that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social or humanitarian nature,

Recalling further the Articles of the Charter of the United Nations that encourage activities through regional cooperation for the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations,

Recalling its Declaration on the Enhancement of Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Arrangements or Agencies in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security of 9 December 1994,

Recognizing that any dispute or conflict in the region impedes cooperation, and stressing the need to solve such a dispute or conflict on the basis of the norms and principles of international law,

Convinced that the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations contributes to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations,

Recalling the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to resolution 59/259,

1. *Encourages* efforts within the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization to consider ways and means of enhancing the contribution of the Organization to security and stability in the region;

2. *Welcomes* the signing in Athens on 3 December 2004 of the Additional Protocol on Combating Terrorism to the Agreement among the Governments of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization Participating States on Cooperation in Combating Crime, in Particular in its Organized Forms;

3. *Also welcomes* the activities of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization aimed at strengthening regional cooperation in various fields, such as energy, transport, institutional reform and good governance, trade and economic development, banking and finance, communications, agriculture and agro-industry, health care and pharmaceuticals, environmental protection, tourism, science and technology, exchange of statistical data and economic information, collaboration among Customs services, and combating organized crime and illicit trafficking in drugs, weapons and radioactive material, acts of terrorism and illegal migration, or in any other related area;

4. *Encourages* the activities of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization aimed at the elaboration and realization of specific joint regional projects, particularly in the field of transport and energy infrastructure, focused on security of supply of respective services to the economies of the region;

5. *Welcomes* the operationalization and financing of projects by the Project Development Fund of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization to the benefit of the sustainable development of the Black Sea region;

6. *Takes note* of the positive contributions of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, the Business Council, the Black

Sea Trade and Development Bank and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies to the strengthening of multifaceted regional cooperation in the Black Sea area;

7. *Appeals* for greater cooperation between the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and international financial institutions in co-financing feasibility and pre-feasibility studies of the projects in the Black Sea area;

8. *Takes note* of the cooperation between the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and the World Bank and the World Trade Organization and the working contacts with the World Tourism Organization, aimed at promoting the sustainable development of the Black Sea region;

9. *Also takes note* of the importance attached by the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization to the strengthening of relations with the European Union, and supports the efforts of the Organization to take concrete steps to advance this cooperation in line with the provisions of the Komotini statement of 23 April 2005, as reinforced by the Chisinau Declaration of 28 October 2005 and the Bucharest statement of 26 April 2006, issued by the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization;

10. *Further takes note* of the cooperation established between the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and other regional organizations and initiatives;

11. *Invites* the Secretary-General to strengthen dialogue with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization with a view to promoting cooperation and coordination between the two secretariats;

12. *Invites* the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to cooperate with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization in order to continue programmes with the Organization and its associated institutions for the achievement of their objectives;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

14. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-third session the sub-item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization".

Latin America and the Caribbean

At its thirty-first session (Montevideo, Uruguay, 20-24 March) [LC/G.2318], the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) considered a document [LC/G.2295(SES.31/4)] entitled "Shaping the Future of Social Protection: Access, Financing and Solidarity," which proposed the creation of a new social protection covenant designed to build bridges between economic, social and cultural rights, as well as create institutions

and policies to enforce them; analysed the region's situation in three areas related to social protection: health systems, pension systems and social programmes to combat poverty; and formulated proposals for reform. It held a high-level seminar on that subject, which included panel discussions on social protection coverage and rights; health service financing and delivery; pension system reform; and social programmes, human capital and inclusion. Chilean President Michelle Bachelet addressed the Commission, describing the main points of her Government's social policies, including reform of the pension system and health care reform; changes in pre-school education and the first four years of primary education, and job creation in the framework of decent employment; plans for overcoming extreme poverty; and an equal opportunity plan. The Commission also had before it reports of the Committee on South-South Cooperation and the ECLAC sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development.

ECLAC adopted a number of resolutions, among them, the Montevideo resolution on Shaping the Future of Social Protection: Access, Financing and Solidarity [res. 626(XXXI)]; and two resolutions, one on the admission of Japan as a member State of ECLAC [res. 627(XXXI)] and the other on the venue of the Commission's thirty-second session [res. 631(XXXI)], which it recommended to the Economic and Social Council for adoption. It also adopted resolutions on international migration [res. 615(XXXI)]; population and development: priority activities for the period 2006-2008 [res. 616(XXXI)]; the Statistical Conference of the Americas [res. 617(XXXI)]; the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean [res. 618(XXXI)]; ECLAC calendar of conferences for 2006-2008 [res. 619(XXXI)]; South-South Cooperation [res. 620(XXXI)]; the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee [res. 621(XXXI)]; the Central American Economic Cooperation Committee [res. 622(XXXI)]; ECLAC priorities and programme of work for the 2008-2009 biennium [res. 623(XXXI)]; support for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti [res. 624(XXXI)]; ECLAC activities in relation to follow-up to the MDGs [res. 625(XXXI)]; the admission of the Turks and Caicos Islands as an associate member of ECLAC [res. 628(XXXI)]; follow-up to the Plan of Action for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean [res. 629(XXXI)]; and support for the work of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning [res. 630(XXXI)].

Economic trends

According to the Latin America and the Caribbean: economic situation and outlook, 2006-2007 [E/2007/19], 2006 was the fourth consecutive year of positive growth and the third year of more than 4 per cent growth. Its GDP expanded by 5.6 per cent, equal to a 4.1 per cent rise in per capita GDP. The international environment remained favorable, and the volume of goods and services exports was up by 8.4 per cent for the region as a whole. Higher prices for the region's main export products translated into an improvement in its terms-of-trade, equivalent to over 7 per cent. As a result of those gains in earnings, together with increased remittances from abroad, the rise in national income, 7.3 per cent, again exceeded GDP growth.

Boosted by strong labour demand, the employment rate rose by 0.5 per cent, to 54 per cent of the working-age population, the highest rate in 15 years. The unemployment rate in the region dropped 0.4 per cent. Only Brazil saw a rise in unemployment. Regional inflation continued its downward trend, with a rate of 4.8 per cent, compared to 6.1 per cent in 2005. The region recorded a surplus on its balance-of-payments current account for the fourth consecutive year, which was estimated at \$51 billion or 1.8 per cent of GDP.

Activities in 2006

Development policy and regional economic performance

The ECLAC Economic Development Division continued to report on the macroeconomic performance of both individual countries and the region as a whole in its publications *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean* and *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean*. It also continued to publish working documents in the Macroeconomics of Development Series.

In the framework of the Macroeconomic Dialogue Network (REDIMA) [YUN 2005, p. 1115], ECLAC contributed to regional integration and macroeconomic policy coordination by fostering network activities and sharing best practices. As for productive development, it provided technical cooperation to 28 stakeholders, including five countries, to formulate innovative development plans and national systems of innovation, and to four countries to develop a methodology for creating clusters and local networks of small and medium-sized enterprises and to support institutions.

ECLAC, in resolution [res. 629(XXXI)], requested that the secretariat support countries of the region in formulating national strategies to reach the goals of the Plan of Action for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (ELAC 2007) [YUN 2005, p. 935], through technical cooperation and studies; promote measures to launch and support the working groups for implementing the Plan of Action; maintain and develop indicators for the on-going assessment and dissemination of progress achieved in the region, especially with respect to the goals of ELAC 2007, provide technical support for organizing the high-level follow-up meeting on the Plan of Action, to be held in San Salvador, El Salvador, in 2007; support countries participating in ELAC 2007 in organizing a regional follow-up meeting to assess the application of the Regional Plan of Action and renew it within the framework of the process intended to achieve the MDGs and the targets set forth in the Plan of Action; and collaborate with the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee to finalize, with the European Commission and other donors, the agreement to fund the Caribbean activities related to follow-up to ELAC 2007 and the World Summit on the Information Society [ibid., p. 933].

The Commission, in resolution [res. 630(XXXI)], noted that the resolutions adopted at the twenty-third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) [ibid., p. 1115] provided for approval of the report of the Institute in the 2004-2005 biennium, the programme of work for the 2006-2007 biennium and the report on ILPES financial situation. The Commission requested that ILPES work in relation to planning be strengthened, while attributing importance to the exchange of experiences, the visions of the countries, and short- and long-term economic, social and territorial dimensions.

In resolution [res. 620(XXXI)], the Commission took note of the document on the activities of the ECLAC system to promote and support South-South cooperation during the 2004-2005 biennium, and underscored the need to expand support for the activities of Governments in the region to improve and expand the use of South-South cooperation mechanisms and modalities in public economic and social development policy and in building national capacities to deal with natural disasters; and for studies to assess the various cooperation options for middle-income countries. It requested the Executive Secretary to strengthen activities aimed at incorporating South-South cooperation modalities into

the secretariat's programme of work for the 2008-2009 biennium, particularly technical cooperation financed with extrabudgetary resources; as well as strategic partnerships with countries, cooperation institutions and international cooperation agencies to increase North-South and South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation; and intensify contacts and collaboration with development agencies and UN system organizations to foster interregional cooperation in the context of globalization.

International trade and integration

The 2006 activities of the ECLAC Division of International Trade and Integration concentrated on increasing regional awareness of the implications and impact of the adoption of new trade rules and disciplines and on strengthening understanding and analytical knowledge of ways of improving linkages with the global economy. ECLAC provided technical support for hemispheric integration and, with financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency, implemented national trade capacity-building strategies for member countries of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. Some 17 missions were organized to provide technical assistance on various aspects of trade agreements, including rules of origin and the projected impact of trade agreement negotiations, using General Computing Equilibrium Models; and 12 technical cooperation missions concentrated specifically on the World Trade Organization (WTO) Doha Round on multilateral trade negotiations (see p. 1111) process. Support for the region's Governments in the light of the uncertainty generated by the breakdown of the WTO negotiations was also discussed at a meeting of experts on foreign trade held in May in Santiago, Chile. In that context, ECLAC continued providing technical cooperation in negotiating and administering trade agreements by launching a joint initiative on South America cooperation and integration with the Andean Community. ECLAC started a project to strengthen competition in the Central American Isthmus, in response to Governments' requests to develop a legal and institutional framework. In 2006, five countries enacted laws and an Intergovernmental Working Group on Competition was set up, involving the competition authorities of Central America.

The Division also organized eight missions to provide policy recommendations on trade relations between China and Latin America, reflecting the growing importance of China as a trade partner for the region. The Division published *Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Economy, 2005: Trends 2006* [LC/G.2341-P].

ECLAC, in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, organized a joint Conference on Globalization of Research and Development by Transnational Corporations: Policy Challenges and Opportunities for Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, 17 January).

Social development and equity

The main activities of ECLAC Social Development Division in 2006 focused on applied research and the strengthening of the institutional capacity of Governments and other stakeholders in the social policy field to design, implement and assess policies, programmes and projects to enhance social equity and integration and to use and exchange information in designing and implementing social policies and programmes.

It continued the ECLAC/World Food Programme agreement [YUN 2005, p. 1116], with the development of subregional and national diagnostic studies on the cost of hunger and malnutrition, and the creation of a methodology adaptable to different areas of development, which led to concrete proposals for achieving the MDGs.

The Division updated poverty, social expenditure, labour market and income distribution databases for at least 18 countries and planned to expand that database. The 2006 edition of the *Social Panorama of Latin America* included new data from 45 countries and territories on 38 indicators for the follow-up to the MDGs.

In that regard, Commission resolution [res. 625(XXXI)] requested the Executive Secretary to coordinate annual regional reports on advances made toward achieving the development goal of reducing hunger and poverty, as well as a regional inter-agency report summing up progress during 2006-2010 regarding all MDG targets.

In the Montevideo resolution [res. 626(XXXI)] on shaping the future of social protection: access, financing and solidarity, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to widely disseminate the document "Shaping the Future of Social Protection: Access, Financing and Solidarity", and promote its review by political, social, academic and business spheres and civil society organizations. It urged the Executive Secretary to undertake a more in-depth analysis of efforts to develop countercyclical public finances to give continuity to social policies; reform of social policy financing; the creation of solidarity mechanisms to permit equitable access to health services for the entire population; mechanisms for progressing in terms of pension coverage, solidarity and viability; the impacts of reforms on gender equity; ways of complementing short-term

programmes for alleviating poverty; best practices applied in social programmes; and methods for ensuring that public policies contributed to social cohesion.

Sustainable development and human settlements

During 2006, the ECLAC Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division focused on analysing public policies and articulating policy recommendations, with special emphasis on the Plan of Implementation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development [YUN 2002, p. 821], and a focus on urban poverty, urban public services, public spaces and urban sustainability analysis.

It provided technical cooperation services related to public efficiency in the management of human settlements, urban environmental management and ways to reduce air pollution in cities. ECLAC supported countries of the region in international fora on the reduction in emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and strengthened sustainable policies by developing new instruments for policy makers. The Division organized 12 technical assistance missions in 10 countries and disseminated its methodology through 15 workshops.

At the third session of the World Urban Forum (Vancouver, Canada, 19-23 June), the Regional Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector (MINURVI) presented a report on progress in the region related to the Habitat Agenda, Agenda 21 and the Human Settlements Regional Action Plan for Latin and the Caribbean in five key thematic issues: production and improvement of urban land; provision and access to basic services and infrastructure and housing; provision and improvement of public areas and social services; the development of productive activities; and the generation of employment and income. ECLAC also provided support to the fifteenth MINURVI meeting in October in Montevideo, Uruguay.

The first regional forum for implementing the decisions adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development was held in January. It studied the current situation and prospects for cooperation in the region in terms of three key issues to be discussed by ECLAC: energy for sustainable development, industrial development and air pollution/atmosphere and climate change.

Population and development

In 2006, the ECLAC Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-

Population Division focused on technical cooperation and support for policymaking, including developing mechanisms for the application of the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing [YUN 2002, p. 1194] and its regional implementation strategy [YUN 2004, p. 1023]. It produced technical assistance documents for use by countries; a methodological guide for the development of advocacy strategies and a guide to participatory evaluations of programmes directed by older persons. In December, it conducted a training workshop on indicators of quality of life in old age for professionals from 13 countries. The Centre provided support to the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development, held during ECLAC thirty-first session, in follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The regional perspective on international migration, human rights and development, presented at ECLAC thirty-first session, gave rise to a series of presentations, short-term advisory services and meetings. The sixteenth Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State (Montevideo, Uruguay, 3-5 November) adopted the Montevideo Commitment on Migration and Development, which called upon ECLAC to coordinate a study on the social and economic impact of the insertion of migrants in receiving countries.

In resolution [res. 616(XXXI)], the Commission called upon the countries in the region to provide the resources to implement key measures of the ICPD Programme of Action, with special reference to the agreements contained in resolution 604(XXX), adopted at its thirtieth session [YUN 2004, p. 1023], and the Madrid International Plan of Action and its Regional Strategy, particularly within the framework of policies aimed at reducing social and ethnic inequalities, overcoming gender inequality and eradicating poverty. It urged the international community to increase technical and financial cooperation to fulfil those objectives. The Commission also asked the secretariat, in coordination with organizations of the Inter-Agency Group on Ageing and the competent institutions of the host country, to organize a regional intergovernmental conference in 2007 to review and assess the advances of countries in the region in applying the Regional Strategy and to prepare the relevant substantive documentation. The secretariat should also organize a special event to mark the fiftieth anniversary of CELADE in 2007. The Commission recommended that, at its 2008 session, the Ad Hoc Committee should analyse the issue of demographic changes from a gender perspective, their influence on development and impact on poverty and inequality.

The Commission, in its resolution on international migration [res. 615(XXXI)], urged Governments that had not yet done so to consider signing and ratifying the UN legal instruments that aimed to promote and protect migrants' human rights as mechanism for full integration, and to define the trafficking in persons in any form as an offence. It welcomed the commitments regarding international migration contained in the Declaration of Salamanca, adopted at the fifteenth Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, and the organization of an Ibero-American meeting on migration in July 2006 in Madrid. It asked the Executive Secretary to inform the Ibero-American secretariat of the special interest of all member countries in participating in that meeting and of the choice of migration for shared development as the theme of the sixteenth Ibero-American Summit.

The Executive Secretary should form an inter-agency group to follow up on issues relating to international migration and development in the region and foster coordination and coherence among the activities of UN system bodies.

Integration of women in development

The work of ECLAC Women and Development Unit focused on promoting the adoption of policies to mainstream the gender perspective into priority areas of government agendas in economic policy, employment, poverty, social protection, institutional development and security, as well as the increased use of monitoring tools, such as gender indicators and planning. ECLAC continued to design, assess and execute national, subregional and regional projects with the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the status of women in the region and on mainstreaming the gender perspective in the main spheres of the regional development process in the ECLAC region.

The Unit promoted gender-disaggregated data as a basis of social analysis and policymaking with respect to gender issues. In the Caribbean sub-region, an agreement was concluded between national statistical offices and national mechanisms for the advancement of women in nine countries and territories. The Unit also provided support to CELADE in processing household survey data for Latin American countries, in developing gender indicators for the Caribbean, as part of a wider inter-agency project, as well as training materials on gender-related issues.

The thirty-ninth Meeting of Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico City, 11-12 May) [LC/L.2599] analysed the mainstreaming

of gender perspectives in public policies and the sustainability of gender machinery. At its fortieth meeting (Santiago, 3-4 October) [LC/L.2598 (MDM. 40/2)], the Presiding Officers requested the organization of an International Seminar on Gender Parity and Political Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Commission, in resolution [res. 618(XXXI)], noted the reports and agreements of the thirty-seventh [YUN 2004, p. 1024] and thirty-eighth [YUN 2005, p. 1117] meetings of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and invited member countries to consider implementing them. It also welcomed the announcement by the Executive Secretary concerning gender mainstreaming throughout ECLAC programme of work, and requested that the secretariat incorporate the analysis of unremunerated work performed by women and their contribution to social protection and caregiving and report to the Commission in 2008.

Economic statistics and technical cooperation

During 2006, the work of the ECLAC Statistics and Economic Projections Division centred on: institutional strengthening, human resources, statistical capacity-building and strengthening of international cooperation. The Division continued efforts to create technical capacities in national accounts and external-sector statistics among the countries of the region; organized workshops and seminars on national accounts, external trade and international classifications; provided technical assistance in the systematization, production and analysis of information; produced and disseminated comparable social, environmental and economic indicators; and developed quantitative methodologies to produce new indicators and utilize existing ones to analyse and formulate public policies in the region. The Division continued to publish the *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

In 2006, ECLAC convened the sixth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Madrid, Spain, 25-26 September) [LC/L.2651]. Participants adopted the final draft strategic plan 2005-2015, incorporating the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6 on strengthening statistical capacity (see p. 1472); approved the draft provisional agenda for the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference, to be held in July 2007 in Santiago; and entrusted the secretariat with preparing a comprehensive report on all activities carried out under the

Programme of Regional Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2005-June 2007.

The Commission, in resolution [res. 617(XXXI)], welcomed the decision to establish a strategic plan for the statistical conference for 2005-2015 and entrusted the Statistical Conference of the Americas with the task of promoting the importance of scaling up to best international practices in terms of the standards of quality, comparability and transparency of national statistics in the region.

Natural resources and infrastructure

The ECLAC Natural Resources and Infrastructure Division conducted work on strengthening institutional capacity in the countries of the region to formulate policies and regulatory mechanisms for sustainable natural-resource management and infrastructures. It provided technical assistance regarding issues related to energy, including renewable energy, access to affordable energy and energy intensity of growth; water, including water-resources legislation and management and drinking water supply and sanitation services; and mining, including environmental impacts, social problems, distribution of rents and fiscal policies. In terms of infrastructure and public utilities, it helped beneficiary countries to define the optimal combination of regulation and market competition in each sector. The Division disseminated research findings and policy recommendations, participated in the fourth World Water Forum (Mexico City, 16-22 March) and presented proposals on the Framework Agreement on Energy Complementarities. It carried out a study on a methodological proposal for evaluating multinational infrastructure projects; provided support to the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America [YUN 2005, p. 1117] on the integrated development of the Amazon Axis; and coordinated the binational project on the Asuncion-Montevideo corridor.

Production and management

The ECLAC Division of Production, Productivity and Management addressed issues in the agricultural, manufacturing and services sectors, including production structure and dynamics, productivity and competitiveness, patterns of investment and international integration, the information society, and knowledge, innovation, technological capacities and vocational training. It provided technical assistance to 28 member States and other stakeholders to formulate innovation development plans and develop national systems of innovation. It helped four countries develop a methodology to establish

working groups at the local level for the creation of clusters and local networks of SMEs.

The Division collaborated with the Statistics and Economic Projections Division in elaborating a core list of information and communication technology (ICT) indicators for the region. It produced several publications, including *Foreign Investment in Latin America and the Caribbean* and others on various issues related to productive development. New topics, such as the information society, the service sector and biofuels, were integrated into the Division's programme of work.

In terms of the Regional Plan of Action for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean [YUN 2005, p. 1118], the Division was active in follow-up. It also prepared an extensive number of ICT-related publications and training manuals, as well as facilitated discussions to define priorities for the ELAC 2010 draft plan.

Subregional activities

Caribbean

The ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, which was also the secretariat of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), continued to provide technical cooperation and applied research for the subregion. Its priorities in economic development were influenced by the proposal to fully establish in 2008 a Caribbean Community single market economy. It also focused on strengthening competitiveness, especially the export performance of private businesses, and increasing the level and quality of foreign investment flows. In terms of social development, its priorities were on demographic issues, poverty and social vulnerability, analysis of women's political participation and unpaid work and the impact of migration on the region.

Activities in the environment and information technology areas continued to be linked to implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. [YUN 2005, p. 946]. CDCC set up a regional coordinating mechanism (RCM) to implement the Mauritius strategy in the Caribbean. The subregional headquarters in Port of Spain would serve as the RCM secretariat for the next two years. The Division also supported the development of alternative sources of energy in the Caribbean, mainly biofuels in Guyana and Jamaica and geothermal energy in Montserrat.

In the areas of statistics and social development, the subregional headquarters continued to provide information on the benefits of data sharing and addressed issues related to data ownership. In terms of implementing the MDGs, the secretariat prepared a social development framework to promote sustained social development in the Caribbean and the achievement of the Goals in the subregion.

At its twenty-first session (Port of Spain, 16-17 January) [LC/CAR/L.86], CDCC adopted resolutions on assistance to its associate member countries; creation of a temporary mechanism for regional follow-up of the Tunis phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and the ELAC 2007 Action Plan; policy research in the area of social vulnerability and alienation; establishment of a regional coordination mechanism for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy; and support for efforts in natural disasters.

The Commission, in resolution [res. 621(XXXI)], endorsed the CDCC resolutions adopted at the Committee's twenty-first session pertaining to the work of the ECLAC subregional headquarters in the Caribbean and called upon the secretariat to support the mobilization of additional resources for the full implementation of the programme of work for the Caribbean.

In a resolution on support for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti [res. 624(XXXI)], the Commission trusted that ECLAC participation in favour of Haiti would be reinforced to encompass all the spheres envisaged in the Mission's mandate and attributed special importance to that country's economic and social development. It recommended that cooperation activities in Haiti be continued and broadened, in close coordination with the Haitian Government.

Mexico and Central America

The ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico provided analyses, training and technical assistance to countries in the subregion. It worked with member States on trade-related capacity-building through a technical cooperation project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency to respond to applied research, training and information dissemination needs identified by countries of the subregion. In terms of competition policy, it launched a project to strengthen competition in Central America in response to the urgent need of Governments to develop a legal and institutional framework in an area where little analysis was available. An Intergovernmental Competition Working Group for the competition authorities of Central America was set up. In order to build up the capacity

of member States in fiscal and monetary policy issues, ECLAC prepared a study on the advances, limitations and challenges of launching a new fiscal pact for the region, which was presented at the REDIMA seminar in Managua, Nicaragua, in May, and organized training courses in macroeconomic modelling. ECLAC was actively involved, with the Inter-American Development Bank, as the technical secretariat for the Central American Energy Emergency Plan developed during the 2004-2005 biennium, and created an action matrix for the development and integration of the subregion's energy sectors.

Concerning the impact of the Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement on the agricultural and rural sectors, ECLAC worked in collaboration with other organizations and national research institutes in Central America to analyse the impact of the Agreement on economic growth, employment, salaries, income distribution and poverty in rural zones, using general economic equilibrium modes.

The Commission, in its resolution on the Central American Economic Cooperation Committee [res. 622(XXXI)], affirmed that the Committee was a forum for reflection and analysis of the subregion's economic and social problems and could provide important inputs in reinforcing Governments' capacity in designing, implementing, following up and assessing public policy in general, especially trade, macroeconomic and microeconomic, social and environmental policies.

Programme and organizational questions

By resolution [res. 623(XXXI)], the Commission approved the draft 2008-2009 programme of work of the ECLAC system [LC/G.2297(SES.31/6)], which encompassed the progressive consolidation of macroeconomic stability, improved integration in the world economy, an increase in social cohesion and in the region's production potential, enhancement of sustainable development policies, gender mainstreaming in public policies and the strengthening of global institutions.

In other action, it approved its proposed calendar of conferences [LC/G.2298(SES.31/7)] for 2006-2008 [res. 619(XXXI)], and decided to maintain the current intergovernmental structure and pattern of meetings.

Venue and participation in ECLAC thirty-second session

By resolution [res. 631(XXXI)], the Commission recommended that the Economic and Social Council

approve the decision to hold ECLAC thirty-second session in Santo Domingo de Guzman, Dominican Republic, in 2008.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 27 July [meeting 41], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of ECLAC [E/2006/15/Add.1], adopted resolution **2006/40** without vote [agenda item 10].

Venue of the thirty-second session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

The Economic and Social Council,

Bearing in mind paragraph 15 of the terms of reference and rules 1 and 2 of the rules of procedure of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

Considering the invitation of the Government of the Dominican Republic to host the thirty-second session of the Commission,

1. *Expresses its gratitude* to the Government of the Dominican Republic for its generous invitation;
2. *Notes* the acceptance by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean of this invitation with pleasure;
3. *Endorses* the decision of the Commission to hold its thirty-second session in Santo Domingo in 2008.

Membership

By resolution [res. 627(XXXI)], the Commission recommended that the Economic and Social Council approve the admission of Japan as a member of ECLAC and authorize the amendment of paragraph 3(a) of the Commission's terms of reference to include Japan's name after that of Italy.

By resolution [res. 628(XXXI)], the Commission decided to grant the Turks and Caicos Islands associate membership in ECLAC.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 27 July [meeting 41], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of ECLAC [E/2006/15/Add.1], adopted resolution **2006/39** without vote [agenda item 10].

Admission of Japan as a member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

The Economic and Social Council,

Bearing in mind that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean was established by the Economic and Social Council by its resolution 106(VI) of 25 February 1948, in which the Council stated that membership in the Commission should be open to States Members of the United Nations in North, Central and South America and in the Caribbean area, and to France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,

Bearing in mind also that the Commission was established on the basis of the participation by all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and those that have had special relations with the region of a historical, cultural, geographical or economic nature,

Recalling that, in this spirit, the Commission subsequently admitted, as members, Spain in 1979, Portugal in 1984, Italy in 1990, and Germany in 2005,

Considering that the Government of Japan has communicated to the Commission, through the Executive Secretary, its desire to be admitted as a member of the Commission,

1. *Welcomes with satisfaction* the request of the Government of Japan that it be admitted to membership of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;

2. *Approves* the admission of Japan as a member of the Commission, and authorizes the amendment of paragraph 3 (a) of the terms of reference of the Commission to include the name of Japan after that of Italy.

Cooperation between UN and SELA

On 22 December the General Assembly, having considered the Secretary-General's report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System (SELA) [A/61/256/Add.1], (**decision 61/552**), decided that the agenda item on the subject would remain for consideration during its resumed sixty-first (2007) session.

Western Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its twenty-fourth session (Beirut, Lebanon, 8-11 May) [E/2006/41], the first biennial session in an even year, in accordance with its 2005 decision to hold sessions in even years only [YUN 2005, p. 1120].

The ministerial segment, which took the form of a round table on general policy issues in the ESCWA region, addressed new challenges in the region and their impact on ESCWA work, particularly youth unemployment problems, and the achievement of the MDGs. The other items on the Commission's agenda, including the report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission, management issues and progress by Yemen in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, were addressed by the Senior Officials segment.

The Commission adopted several resolutions, including those to be brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council (see below).

Economic trends

In 2006, the ESCWA region marked its fourth consecutive year of robust economic expansion, according to the summary of the survey of economic and social developments in the ESCWA region, 2006-2007 [E/2007/20]. Recent favourable external economic conditions, represented by high oil prices, continued to buoy the region, and together with various efforts of intraregional cooperation, helped to minimize the adverse effects of conflict that would otherwise have been more devastating to and increased the vulnerability of the region. Although the rate of GDP expansion slowed in 2006, as compared with the previous year, it was still high in most countries. Excluding Iraq, Lebanon and the Palestinian territory, where regional conflicts and political instabilities reduced economic potential significantly and security pressures pushed down business and consumer confidence, GDP growth in the region stood at an estimated 5.6 per cent in 2006, down from 6.9 per cent in 2005. Growth was stable in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), at 5.9 per cent on average, after registering 7.3 per cent in 2005, fuelled by crude oil production and exports, as well as the development of non-oil sectors, such as financial services and construction. The more diversified economies experienced growth of 5.1 per cent, down from 6 per cent the previous year, and were sheltered from the potential foreign exchange constraints that could otherwise hamper growth of domestic demands. In Egypt and Jordan, the industrial sector developed rapidly and strong confidence in business and consumption led to faster recoveries in stock market performance. The conflict-affected economies of Iraq, Lebanon and the Palestinian territory posted negative GDP growth for the most part, with Palestinian economy shrinking 6.9 per cent and Lebanon's by 5 per cent. Iraq's economy grew 8 per cent, versus 10 per cent the previous year. The construction sector was strong in the subregion, reflecting high inflows in foreign capital, as well as fiscal capital expenditure, which sustained domestic demand and offset factors that dented business and consumer confidence.

The average inflation rate stood at 6.7 per cent in 2006, up from 4.4 per cent in 2005, fuelled by high international commodity prices.

Oil

In 2006, despite the weaker than expected demand growth, crude oil prices continued to be historically high. The crude oil price of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) reference

basket averaged \$61.8 per barrel in 2006, compared to \$50.6 in 2005. The tight supply-demand condition in fuel products continued to be the bottleneck in refinery capability, while the speculative factor, owing to ample global monetary liquidity, caused a rapid price hike until the summer, followed by a rapid plunge toward year's end. The total crude oil production of ESCWA OPEC members (Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates) declined slightly in 2006, from the 2005 level of 19.4 million barrels per day. However, the high oil prices resulted in a 25.7 per cent increase in gross oil export revenues to \$401 billion for the region.

Trade

In 2006, the United States-Middle East Free Trade Area was still under negotiation. A free trade agreement was signed between Oman and the United States in January; a free trade pact between Bahrain and the United States in August; and the United Arab Emirates was negotiating an accord with the United States. Parallel to those developments and within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the Agadir Agreement between Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia came into effect, aimed at establishing a free trade agreement between the four Arab Mediterranean countries with benefits of preferential access to European Union (EU) markets. The GCC was engaged in trade negotiations with the EU to set up a free trade agreement, and was considering free trade pacts with China, India and Singapore.

Activities in 2006

In 2006, ESCWA activities under its 2006-2007 draft work programme [E/ESCWA/23/7] continued to focus on the four pivotal priorities: globalization and regional integration, social policies, water and energy, and information and communication technologies; and the advancement and empowerment of women, national statistical capacity-building, especially in monitoring the attainment of the MDGs, and the special needs of countries emerging from conflict. ESCWA later proposed changes to realign the work programme with the 2005 World Summit Outcome and the outcome of the second phase of the World Summit of the Information Society, among other things [E/ESCWA/24/6(Part II)Rev.1].

Attainment of the MDGs

During the Commission's twenty-fourth session, a round-table discussion took place on the achieve-

ment of the MDGs [YUN 2000, p. 51] in ESCWA member countries. The round-table had before it a report [E/ESCWA/24/4(Part III)], which summarized progress in the implementation of the Damascus Declaration, adopted by the Commission and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 2005/50 [YUN 2005, p. 1121], and in the achievement of the MDGs, particularly in Iraq and the Palestinian territory. The report also reviewed development-related events in the Arab region and the challenges faced in achieving the MDGs, in the light of the outcome of the 2005 World Summit.

World Summit follow-up

On 11 May [E/2006/41 (res. 269(XXIV))], the Commission adopted the draft strategic framework for 2008-2009, which addressed the main critical areas of importance to Western Asia and the priorities identified in the 2005 World Summit Outcome; approved the changes proposed to the ESCWA programme of work for 2006-2007; and called upon member countries to work toward achieving the Summit objectives. It requested the Executive Secretary to increase coherence and synergy with other regional UN organizations, and foster partnerships and cooperation with them.

Economic development and cooperation

In 2006, ESCWA published the *Annual Review of Developments in Globalization and Regional Integration in the Arab Countries, 2006* [E/ESCWA/GRID/2006/3], which focused on assessing the involvement of Arab economies in selected global economic sectors: tourism, trade, investment, oil and gas. It also examined the progress made by Arab countries in integrating into the global economy and expediting Arab economic integration.

A pre-feasibility study on the establishment of the ESCWA Technology Centre for Development [E/ESCWA/ICTD/2006/WP.1] was reviewed by the third meeting of the ESCWA Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation (Beirut, 6-7 March).

On 11 May [E/2006/41 (res. 274(XXIV))], the Commission, recognizing the role of science and technology in accelerating development and as one of the priorities of the United Nations, and bearing in mind the pre-feasibility study on the establishment of the ESCWA Technology Centre, approved in principle the establishment of such a centre. It requested the secretariat to follow up with member countries with respect to hosting the centre and securing its financial sources, and to take the necessary actions aimed at establishing it.

On the same day [E/2006/41 (res. 270(XXIV))], the Commission, noting with concern the problems associated with financial sector development in facing the recent volatility in market behaviour that could have serious repercussions for socio-economic development and the attainment of the MDGs in the region, urged member countries to take appropriate macroeconomic policy measures and develop regulatory frameworks that would help stabilize and promote orderly and transparent performance in financial markets. The secretariat should monitor and analyse, in cooperation with relevant regional and international institutions, the possible consequences of financial market instability, with a view to assessing the impact of such events on regional socio-economic development and to undertake regular and timely forecasts and policy analyses of current and emergent macroeconomic trends.

Development and regional cooperation

On 11 May [E/2006/41 (res. 271(XXIV))], the Commission, recalling its 2005 resolution on development and regional cooperation under unstable conditions [YUN 2005, p. 1122], requested member states to intensify efforts to attain peace, security and stability at the regional and international levels. It asked the ESCWA secretariat to enhance the capacity of countries to assess, predict and respond to socio-economic challenges posed by conflict and instability through monitoring, analysing and reporting on their repercussions on socio-economic development; formulate and implement operational activities for rehabilitation and development in conflict-stricken areas; assist conflict countries with improvements in good governance, public administration, rule of law and socio-economic decision-making; and support the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission in the ESCWA region. Further, it requested that the international community lift the economic, political and financial embargoes imposed on the Palestinian people and assist in liberating them from Israeli occupation, meet Palestinian basic humanitarian needs, and rehabilitate its economic and social sectors.

Technical cooperation

ESCWA first *Technical Cooperation Report 2006* [E/ESCWA/PPTCD/2007/Technical Material.1] documented the Commission's technical cooperation activities in managing water and energy resources; promoting social policies; stimulating economic development and integration; harnessing ICT for development; developing statistical capacities; empowering women; and assisting conflict-stricken countries. It also discussed ESCWA Technical

Cooperation Strategy adopted in 2005 [YUN 2005, p. 1122] to help clarify the Commission's position concerning the provision of technical cooperation, improve its delivery, effectiveness and efficiency and lay the groundwork for its development.

The Commission, on 11 May [E/2006/41 (res. 275(XXIV))], recalling its 2005 resolution on strengthening technical cooperation in ESCWA, requested the secretariat to continue to implement the Strategy and take appropriate measures to launch the technical cooperation information and knowledge-sharing network. It approved the multi-year funding plan and requested that member countries and donors make voluntary annual contributions through the ESCWA Trust Fund for Regional Activities, project/activity agreements between ESCWA and donors, or agreements for in-kind cooperation and support. The secretariat should prepare a specific plan of action for partnership development and resource mobilization.

The Commission also considered the report by the Executive Secretary on ESCWA technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services [E/ESCWA/24/5(Part III)] undertaken in 2005.

Transport

The Committee on Transport, at its seventh session (Beirut, 17-19 April) [E/ESCWA/GRID/2006/IG.1/4], recommended that ESCWA adopt the plan of action for implementation of the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq [YUN 2002, p. 1019] and a draft resolution concerning follow-up to implementation of components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq for submission to ESCWA twenty-fourth session.

In other action, the Committee urged countries that had not yet signed or ratified the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq [YUN 2001, p. 928] to do so and urged all countries to review the report of the ESCWA consultant on follow-up to the plan of action for implementing the Agreement. It also urged countries that had not yet signed or ratified the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning cooperation in maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq [YUN 2005, p. 1123] to do so, and asked ESCWA to prepare a draft plan of action for implementing the MOU for circulation at an expert group meeting in September and to submit it to the eighth session of the Committee. The Committee also made recommendations with regard to: the regional road transport information system; road safety; the programme or work for the 2006-2007 biennium; the holding of annual sessions; and the annual follow-up reports on the implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

On 11 May [E/2006/41 (res. 279(XXIV))], the Commission, in follow-up to implementation of components on the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq, urged member countries to complete implementation of the plan of action for the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq by the time specified and begin implementation of the plan of action for the Agreement on Railways in Arab Mashreq. It also urged member countries that had not yet signed or ratified the MOU on Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Transport in the Arab Mashreq to do so and requested that the secretariat follow up and submit an annual report to the Committee on Transport on progress made on the two Agreements, the MOU, priority routes M40 and M45, the national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade and road safety.

Information

A workshop on ICT policymaking in ESCWA member countries (Beirut, 2-4 May) resulted in the formation of an initial network of ICT policymakers aimed at sharing experiences and knowledge in the field of ICT strategies and their implementation. Topics and issues of concern for the region were also discussed through an online forum managed by ESCWA.

On 11 May [E/2006/41 (res. 273(XXIV))], the Commission, guided by the 2005 Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted at the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society [YUN 2005, p. 933], and considering the 2004 Damascus Call for Partnership and the work carried out by ESCWA in developing the Regional Plan of Action for Building the Information Society, called on the secretariat to provide member countries with technical assistance to implement national plans of action through workshops, advisory services and other means of technical cooperation in areas related to formulation and implementation of national ICT strategies, capacity-building, multi-stakeholder partnerships and ICT applications for socio-economic development. It also called on the secretariat, in coordination with member countries, to participate actively in implementing the Regional Plan of Action and continually update that Plan as progress was made in achieving its objectives. The Executive Secretary was asked to submit a report at ESCWA twenty-fifth session on follow-up to the Tunis Agenda, implementation of the plans of action regarding progress achieved in member countries, and ESCWA efforts in that regard.

Statistics

The Commission had before it reports by the Executive Secretary on the development of statistical work in the ESCWA region, including a report on streamlining the work of the Commission [E/ESCWA/24/6(Part I)/Add.1], which provided an overview of changes in the statistical programme in the light of the restructuring of ESCWA in 2003, the audits and reviews by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and ESCWA internal evaluation.

On 11 May [E/2006/41 (res. 276(XXIV))], ESCWA called on member countries to improve their national institutional statistical frameworks, including national statistical development strategies, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics of the UN Statistical Commission. It urged them to step up efforts to produce and disseminate reliable and timely indicators of progress in achieving national and international development goals, including the MDGs. The Commission requested the secretariat to continue supporting member countries through expert group meetings, training workshops and advisory services to improve the coverage, quality and comparability of qualitative statistics and data, particularly in such emerging fields as the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses and MDG-related issues, and to implement the draft strategic framework for the 2008-2009 biennium with respect to the statistics subprogramme. Further, it urged donors, regional and international financial institutions and the private sector to support ESCWA efforts to assist member countries in building their national statistical capacities.

Social development

On 11 May [E/2006/41 (res. 277(XXIV))], the Commission, taking into consideration its 2005 resolution on social policies [YUN 2005, p. 1124], the progress made in ESCWA in concluding a MOU with the Government of Bahrain on that issue, and the successful National Conference for Social Policies (Bahrain, 24-25 April), which recommended the holding of an Arab forum on social policies in the Arab region, requested the secretariat to organize the forum, with the aim of increasing interest in integrated and effective social policies, promoting dialogue and the exchange of views, and strengthening coordination mechanisms. It urged member countries to adopt an integrated social policy approach and called upon them to make use of ESCWA analytical activities and technical and advisory services.

The Commission had before it a review of progress made by Yemen in 2001-2005 in implementing the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 [E/ESCWA/24/7], which noted that Yemen had made strenuous efforts to achieve economic and social development, which had produced good results, given the limited financial and human resources available.

Youth

During its annual session, the Commission held a round-table discussion on facing youth unemployment problems in the ESCWA region. It had before it a report on the subject [E/ESCWA/24/4(Part II)/Rev.1], which examined the scope of the problem, the characteristics of unemployed youth, youth and emigration, the impact of youth unemployment on Arab economies and the gap between education outputs and labour market needs, as well as initiatives to address the problem. It proposed two major initiatives in that regard. The first called for the establishment of a regional observatory to monitor international experiences by focusing on policies that had successfully eradicated the problem and setting up a database on the issue in general and on the impact on youth in each Arab country in particular, with the aim of designing and disseminating indicators to track changes in employment. The second entailed the creation of a regional fund to finance prototype initiatives for youth employment, beginning with an in-depth feasibility study of the design for such a fund and ways to finance and manage it.

On 11 May [E/2006/41 (res. 272 (XXIV))], the Commission called upon member countries to include youth policies in their national development strategies by mainstreaming the youth perspective into all planning processes; preparing national youth policies; and devising political action plans for youth employment in order to limit the migration of a skilled and creative workforce. Member countries were asked to make available up-to-date and accurate national statistics on youth unemployment, collect periodic data on all youth-related issues, including employment, education and health; and carry out studies on factors leading to unemployment and their impact, with a view to devising appropriate policies to resolve the problem. The secretariat should help develop statistical indicators on youth employment, and incorporate them into development indicators, including those for the MDGs, as well as devise, in cooperation with relevant Arab and international organizations, a mechanism for establishing a system to provide information on

Arab labour markets. Member countries should encourage the exchange of labour, in particular well-qualified youth labour, among the countries of the region, thereby helping to circulate financial resources within the region and contribute to regional development as a whole.

Women

On 11 May [E/2006/41 (res. 278(XXIV))], the Commission, considering that several regional countries had suffered from instability because of war and conflicts, the negative impacts of which affected women more, affirmed the need for member countries and the secretariat to accord the exceptional needs of women living in unstable conditions the requisite importance in their plans and programmes. The secretariat should also examine the situation of women in those ESCWA member countries suffering from occupation, war and conflict, and help build their capacities in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The Commission urged member countries to increase their representation, participation and empowerment of women at all levels of decision-making and in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes.

Programme and organizational questions

The Commission had before it reports by the Executive Secretary on progress made during the 2004-2005 biennium in implementing the programme of work [E/ESCWA/24/5(Part I)], on a proposed multi-year funding plan [E/ESCWA/24/5(Part IV)], the 2006-2007 draft work programme [E/ESCWA/23/7], proposed programme changes for the 2006-2007 biennium [E/ESCWA/24/6(Part II)/Rev.1] and the draft strategic framework for the 2008-2009 biennium [E/ESCWA/24/6(Part III)].

The Commission decided to form a technical committee to follow up on implementation of programme activities and support ESCWA in achieving its aims. The Commission adopted the proposed programme budget changes for the 2006-2007 biennium and the draft strategic framework for the 2008-2009 biennium.

OIOS report. An OIOS report on the inspection of ESCWA programme and administrative management [A/61/61] observed that ESCWA consistently strove to attain its vision of becoming an action-oriented regional centre of excellence, in particular by applying an integrated and disciplinary approach to addressing the regional challenges of globalization and development in the context of the MDGs. OIOS observed that UN tools for results-based

management were consistently promoted and that ESCWA was one of the most advanced entities in that regard. However, its organizational structure had to be normalized; the Statistical Division needed to be re-established; ESCWA comparative advantages had to be reassessed and its collaborative networking with regional partners strengthened; information and knowledge management advanced; and the executive management culture made more consistent, objective and transparent. A note by the Secretary-General [A/61/61/Add.1] transmitting his comments on that report provided clarification on issues raised by OIOS, particularly those regarding the organizational structure, information and knowledge management, programme support and executive management.

On 22 December, the General Assembly, by **decision 61/551 A**, decided that the agenda item on the report of OIOS on the inspection of the programme and administrative management of ESCWA and the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments on that report would remain for consideration during its resumed sixty-first (2007) session.

Cooperation with LAS

In follow-up to the Commission's 2005 resolution on strengthening the cooperation between the Commission and the League of Arab States (LAS) [YUN 2005 p. 1125], the seventy-seventh regular session of LAS Social and Economic Council (Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 13-16 February) adopted a resolution calling for an MOU between the two bodies on the mechanisms for economic and social cooperation. The ESCWA secretariat was following up on the matter and would submit a report on it during the Commission's twenty-fifth session.

The Secretary-General, in his consolidated report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations [A/61/256], described cooperation between LAS and the United Nations, including with ESCWA.

The General Assembly, in **resolution 61/14** of 13 November (see p. 1599), noted the report.

ESCWA twenty-fifth session

During its twenty-fourth session, the Commission decided to hold its twenty-fifth session in Beirut, Lebanon, in April 2008.