Regional economic and social activities

In 2014, the five UN regional commissions of the Economic and Social Council—the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)—continued to provide technical cooperation, including advisory services, to their Member States, promote programmes and projects and provide training to enhance national capacity-building. Four of them—ECA, ESCAP, ECLAC and ESCWA—held regular sessions during the year while ECE did not meet in 2014. The Executive Secretaries of the commissions continued to hold periodic meetings to exchange views and coordinate activities and positions on major development issues.

ECA held its forty-seventh session under the theme “Industrialization for inclusive and transformative development in Africa”. A defining feature of 2014 was the adoption by African leaders of key frameworks for the continent’s economic and social development, in particular the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 and the AU “Common African Position on the post-2015 development agenda”. The ECA engagement with leading pan-African institutions, notably the AU Commission, resulted also in the endorsement of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa. At the Commission’s ninth African Development Forum, over 900 stakeholders from across the continent adopted the Marrakech Consensus on innovative financing for Africa’s transformation.

ESCAP held its seventieth session in May and August, exploring the relationship between regional connectivity and shared prosperity, particularly the mechanisms through which regional connectivity affected and contributed to prosperity. During the year, three priority areas emerged for the Commission: solidifying its role as a regional knowledge hub, enhancing its role as the preeminent regional intergovernmental platform for building consensus on norms, agreements and policies; and seeking innovative partnerships between government and civil society.

At its thirty-fifth session, ECLAC considered the document entitled “Compacts for Equality: Towards a Sustainable Future” which, along with the 2010 and 2012 documents, completed the trilogy on the subject of equality. On 24 April, the International Year of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was launched in Kingston, Jamaica. On the recommendation of ECLAC, in November, the Economic and Social Council endorsed the establishment of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean as a subsidiary body of the Commission that would contribute to the progress of social development policies and activities in the countries of the region. Further, on the recommendation of the Commission, the Council endorsed the admission of Sint Maarten as an ECLAC associate member.

The theme of the ESCWA twenty-eighth session was social justice in the policies of Arab States. The session concluded with the adoption of the Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region, despite the political instability that continued to characterize the Arab region in 2014. The Declaration represented a contract between ESCWA and its Member States to promote social justice through the development of policies based on rights, equality and equity, and the elimination of all forms of social injustice and discrimination in Arab countries through legislative and constitutional reforms.

On the recommendation of ESCWA, the Economic and Social Council endorsed the establishment of an intergovernmental committee on technology for development that would replace the Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation; and redesignated the ESCWA Technical Committee as the Executive Committee.

Regional cooperation

In 2014, the United Nations continued to strengthen cooperation among its regional commissions, between them and other UN entities, and with regional and international organizations. In accordance with Assembly resolution 68/1 [YUN 2013, p. 1413], the Economic and Social Council “coordination segment”, under which the Council had previously discussed regional activities, was replaced by the “coordination and management meetings”. One of the main functions of those meetings was to review the reports of the Council’s subsidiary bodies, including the regional commissions.

On 30 January (decision 2014/203), the Council decided that the coordination and management meet-
ings would be held from 23 to 25 April, on 12 and 13 June, from 14 to 16 July and on 17 and 18 November.

Meetings of Executive Secretaries. The Executive Secretaries of the five regional commissions met in Santiago, Chile, in March; in New York, in July on the margins of the high-level political forum and the Economic and Social Council; again in New York in September on the margins of the General Assembly; and in December through videoconferencing [E/2014/15 & E/2015/15]. The issues discussed included accountability in the post-2015 development agenda; providing input to the report of the Secretary-General entitled “The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet”; preparation for the third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in July 2015; and interregional policy cooperation.

Cooperation in the economic, social and related fields

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1823 (XVII) [YUN 1962, p. 293] and Economic and Social Council resolution 1817(LV) [YUN 1973, p. 449], the Secretary-General in June submitted a report [E/2014/15] structured in two main sections. The first provided regional perspectives on three global processes: the post-2015 development agenda; the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in Samoa in September; and the review of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014. The second part covered developments in selected areas of regional and interregional cooperation, including policy matters, efforts to promote coherence at the regional level, cooperation with non-United Nations regional organizations, and enhanced interregional cooperation among the regional commissions.

Two addendums [E/2014/15/Add.1.2 & Add.1/Rev.1] contained information on resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia at their regular sessions.

The Economic and Social Council took note of the report and related addendums on 17 November (decision 2014/255).

Africa


The Commission, including its experts and ministerial segments, discussed a number of issues: the cost of hunger in Africa [E/ECA/COE/33/9]; economic and social developments in Africa in 2013 [E/ECA/COE/33/2]; the statutory report on the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning [E/ECA/COE/33/13]; the report on the UN support to the AU and its New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) [E/ECA/33/15]; progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa [E/ECA/COE/33/3]; status of integration in Africa [E/ECA/COE/33/5], the African regional integration index [E/ECA/COE/33/20]; a proposed strategic framework for the period 2016–2017 [E/ECA/COE/33/12]; the establishment of the South-South and triangular cooperation for Africa post-2015 [E/ECA/COE/33/8]; outcomes of the nineteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [E/ECA/COE/33/18]; a new continent-wide initiative for gender equality and women’s empowerment [E/ECA/COE/33/19]; the Extraordinary Experts’ Meeting of AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance [E/ECA/COE/33/10].


The activities of the Commission were summarized in the ECA annual report 2015 [E/ECA/COE/34/11].
**Economic trends**

A defining feature of 2014 was the adoption by African leaders of transformative frameworks for the continent’s economic and social development, in particular, the AU Agenda 2063 and the document adopted by the AU entitled “Common African Position on the post-2015 development agenda”. ECA engagement with leading pan-African institutions, notably the African Union Commission (AUC), resulted also in the endorsement of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa. At the Commission’s ninth African Development Forum, over 900 stakeholders from across the African continent adopted the Marrakech Consensus on innovative financing for Africa’s transformation, which promised to exert significant influence in the lead-up to the third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in July 2015. Similar efforts by ECA and collective approaches helped to inform and strengthen the negotiating positions of the African Group in relation to the post-Bali work programme of the World Trade Organization.

Despite the weak global economy, Africa’s growth increased from 3.7 per cent in 2013 to 3.9 per cent in 2014 (E/2015/17), making Africa the second fastest-growing region after East and South Asia. The continent’s growth was underpinned by improved governance and macroeconomic management, investment in infrastructure, rapid urbanization, a growing middle class and rising aggregate demand, diversified trade and investment ties with emerging economies, and improved regional integration and diversified trade partnerships within the region.

Private consumption and investment, which grew by 3.3 per cent and 1.6 per cent during the year, down from 3.4 per cent and 1.8 per cent respectively in 2013, remained the key drivers of gross domestic product (GDP) growth. Growth in private consumption was underpinned by increased consumer confidence and an expanding middle class. Investment was driven mainly by an improved business environment, and increased government spending on infrastructure was also an important driver of GDP growth in 2014.

Although crude oil prices continued to fall between June and December, the impact on Africa’s growth was marginal. In fact, the low prices helped the continent’s GDP to grow by an extra 0.03 per cent, owing to the positive impact on oil-importing countries and the marginal negative impact on oil-exporting countries. Deteriorating oil prices were the key driver of fiscal deficit increases among oil-exporting countries, in addition to fuel subsidies and infrastructure spending in many countries. Nonetheless, African oil-exporting countries (except for Libya) grew faster than other African countries in 2014, with growth of 4.7 per cent, up from 4.4 per cent in 2013.

The region’s average fiscal deficit widened from 3.6 per cent of GDP in 2013 to 4.6 per cent in 2014. The continent, however, continued to attract more and more private capital owing to an improved business environment resulting, inter alia, from regulatory improvements, such as those observed in Mauritius and Rwanda. Foreign direct investment (FDI) was the second largest source of external private equity inflows and increased from $57.2 billion in 2013 to $61.1 billion in 2014, while portfolio flows decreased from $31.6 billion in 2013 to $24.1 billion in 2014. Overseas development assistance received by Africa accounted for 3.7 per cent of the continent’s GDP.

At the subregional level, Central and Southern Africa’s growth was expected to continue; strengthened regional integration continued to boost GDP growth in East Africa; North Africa’s growth (excluding Libya) fell slightly, from 2.8 per cent in 2013 to 2.7 per cent in 2014; and West Africa grew by 5.9 per cent in 2014, up one percentage point from 2013, despite the impact of the Ebola outbreak on the GDP of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

In March, the 2014 edition of the ECA annual flagship report, the *Economic Report on Africa* on the theme “Dynamic Industrial Policy in Africa” was launched at different venues, both within and outside Africa.


**Activities**

In 2014, the ECA programme of work was organized under ten subprogrammes: macroeconomic policy; regional integration and trade; innovations, technologies and management of Africa’s natural resources; statistics; capacity development; technical cooperation; gender and women in development; subregional activities for development; development planning and administration; and social development [E/ECA/COE/34/11]. Other activities included the review of the key issues and outcomes of the meetings of ECA subsidiary bodies. A review of the Commission’s intergovernmental machinery, undertaken in 2013 as part of the institutional reforms, resulted in the elimination of overlapping bodies. Accordingly, in 2014, the intergovernmental machinery focused on overall development issues at the subregional and regional levels, as well as several expert-level subsidiary bodies. It consisted of the following organs: the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, which provided the necessary legislative mandate and policy guidance to the Commission; its Committee of Experts, providing technical support to the Conference; and the Bureau of the Commission, including a representative from...
each of the five subregions. Five intergovernmental committees of experts oversaw the overall formulation and implementation of the programme of work and priorities of their respective offices and made recommendations on economic and social development, and the promotion and strengthening of subregional economic cooperation and integration. Four organs under the Commission had functional and sectoral responsibilities: the Committee on Gender and Social Development, the Committee on Sustainable Development, the Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration, and the Committee on Statistics.

**Macroeconomic policy**

The subprogramme on macroeconomic policy aimed to promote policies, strategies and programmes for sustainable growth and development and to contribute to economic transformation in Africa, while helping to mitigate any possible adverse effects of policies.

In 2014, the subprogramme released a report on the macroeconomic framework for the structural transformation of African economies, which reviewed existing frameworks and proposed a new one.

Throughout the year, the subprogramme worked in partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC) on the production and dissemination of the African common position on the post-2015 development agenda, the translation of the related documents into goals and targets, and the development of an advocacy strategy. Most elements of the African common position were reflected in the proposal submitted by the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals.

In April, ECA contributed extensively to the Pan-African Conference on Inequalities in the Context of Structural Transformation, held in Accra, Ghana. The conference culminated in a draft policy statement calling upon all governments and stakeholders to make the reduction of inequalities in Africa a priority in their current and forthcoming development agendas.

In May, a collaborative effort with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs resulted in ECA hosting a regional outreach meeting for the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing. The Committee was formed after the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (YUN 2012, p. 780) and was mandated by the General Assembly to produce a report proposing options for an effective financing strategy in achieving sustainable development objectives.

In June, the *African Governance Report III* on the theme “Elections and the management of diversity in Africa” was launched, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and in July, ECA convened an expert group meeting in Addis Ababa to explore the theme and methodology of the *African Governance Report IV*.

In August, ECA, in collaboration with the African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and in partnership with AUC, convened an expert group meeting on the post-2015 accountability framework, which brought together officials of the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, civil society, governments and the private sector in the region. The outcome document outlined key elements of an accountability framework for the post-2015 development agenda from an African perspective.

In October, the ninth African Development Forum was held in Morocco under the theme “Innovative sources of financing Africa’s transformation”, on issues relating to domestic resource mobilization, illicit financial flows, private equity, and new forms of partnership, which resulted in the Marrakech Consensus outlining key commitments towards innovative financing for Africa’s transformation.

From 1 to 3 November, ECA hosted the ninth annual African Economic Conference, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Also in November, the *MDG Report 2014: Assessing Progress in Africa toward the Millennium Development Goals* was launched in Addis Ababa. It assessed performance by African countries, both individually and as a region, in the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and included a discussion of the initial development conditions in Africa at the time of the adoption of the Goals.

At the end of the year, the prototype of an Africa-oriented economic forecasting model was developed and was expected to be finalized and launched in 2015.

**Regional integration and trade**

The regional integration and trade subprogramme prioritized support for Africa’s efforts to establish a continental free trade area and a common market by 2017. It also provided policy-oriented research on the linkages between investment policy and the principal driving forces of regional integration, namely, land, agriculture, food security, energy, infrastructure, trade and industrialization.

In 2014, ECA provided evidence-based policy support to countries to enhance their capacity to mobilize resources for development and improve private sector competitiveness. The Commission assessed investment needs and opportunities, with attention to the needs of regional projects; the promotion of agricultural and rural development, food security and land management; and the growth of agribusiness and value chains in Africa. It also provided evidence-based analysis of the extent to which Africa’s export expansion had been accompanied by a diversification of its trade.
Progress was made in furthering the initiative on boosting intra-African trade and promoting a continental free trade area among Member States and regional economic communities. The initiative was formulated in response to a directive from the AU Assembly at its twenty-third ordinary session, held in June, that requested the AU, ECA, the African Development Bank and other relevant agencies to take appropriate measures for the effective implementation of the road map on the continental free trade area.

In March, ECA and AU presented a proposed methodology for an African regional integration index to the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance at their seventh joint annual meetings. Both bodies passed resolutions supporting the index. The project was then merged with a similar initiative by the African Development Bank and ECA. The Bank and AU finalized a joint methodology and road map to implement the project. ECA contributed to the development of metadata and questionnaires for the indicators and presented a first progress report on the index to the Committee of Directors General of African National Statistics Offices and the Statistical Commission for Africa at their first joint session, held in Tunis, Tunisia, in December.

During the year, the ECA Observatory on Regional Integration in Africa became fully operational and was regularly updated, so that it could serve as a repository of real-time data on country profiles, treaties and other sources of information. The Commission provided capacity-building support to the African group of negotiators in Geneva in the run-up to the ninth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which resulted in the consolidation of the African group position on the WTO post-Bali work programme.

ECA also undertook a major review of bilateral investment policies and the bilateral investment treaties in 36 African countries to explore the prospects for regional integration in Africa and its implications, with the objective of assessing the prevalence, scope and application of such policies and treaties in Africa and their contribution to development, and to come up with appropriate policy recommendations.

In 2014, ECA provided training to Member States on emerging trends in international agricultural markets and the strategic interests of African countries, thus helping them to promote regional integration and the establishment of the continental free trade area.

In April, ECA provided services for the third session of the AU Conference of African Ministers of Transport, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The Conference adopted the Road Safety Charter for Africa and the African regional review on the status of implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action [UN 2003, p. 875]. In addition, ECA organized a regional seminar on promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency, which focused on investment and financing challenges. During the year, ECA initiated the Regional Forum on the Implementation of Cross-Border Transport Infrastructure Projects in Africa as a platform for the monitoring and evaluation of infrastructure projects. The first meeting of the Forum was convened in July.

In May, the AU-ECA Joint Conference of Ministers of Agriculture, Rural Development, Fisheries and Aquaculture made commitments to adopt and implement the seven goals of the programme for Africa’s accelerated agricultural growth and transformation by 2015 and, in that context, the subprogramme led the work of drafting the report on the state of food and nutrition security in Africa.

In the area of land management in Africa, six regional economic communities and two Member States, with the ECA support, developed workplans for the implementation of the AU Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa. In June, ECA submitted its implementation status report on the Declaration, along with a proposed monitoring and evaluation mechanism and a capacity development framework.

**Innovations, technologies and management of Africa’s natural resources**

The focus of the subprogramme was to promote the adoption and implementation of initiatives in the areas of natural resources management, climate change and new technologies, in order to promote economic and social transformation in Africa.

During the year, 15 capacity-building initiatives were adopted by the ECA Member States, regional economic communities and AU, including the development of an e-government indicator manual and the e-government strategy in Guinea; the development of continental guidelines on open government and related data in Africa; and the formulation of implementation plans for an information and communications technology policy in Cameroon, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana and Morocco.

In 2014, ECA contributed to the annual African meeting on innovation, science and technology—1st-Africa 2014—held in Mauritius in May; to the annual conference on technologically enhanced education and training in Africa—e-Learning Africa—held in Kampala, Uganda, also in May; and to the high-level meeting for a ten-year review of progress on the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society organized by the International Telecommunication Union in Geneva in June.

In partnership with Nigeria, ECA organized the third meeting of the African Internet Governance...
Forum, held in Abuja in July, and participated in the
ninth annual meeting of the global Internet Govern-
ance Forum, held in Istanbul, Turkey, in September.

In 2014, eca engaged with students and research-
ers in designing and marketing technological innova-
tions for improved health care in Ethiopia, Kenya,
Malawi, Uganda and Zambia.

The African Green Economy Partnership, adopted
at the fourteenth African Ministerial Conference on
the Environment in 2012, had demonstrated the
strong commitment of African leaders towards the
green economy. Accordingly, the subprogramme con-
tinued to encourage African experts and policymakers
to identify the necessary measures for an inclusive
green economy in Africa, and conducted case studies
on green economy in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Gabon,
Mozambique and Tunisia.

Eca assisted Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania,
Ghana and Guinea in implementing and designing
their country mining visions. During the year, the
eca-assisted African Minerals Development Centre
launched the Africa Mining Vision Day to build on the
outcomes of the third session of the AU Conference
of Ministers Responsible for Mineral Resources
Development. The Centre also launched a project to
review tax design and management in four mineral-
exporting African countries, namely, the Democratic
Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Tanzania and
Zambia; and initiated a study on gender and min-
ing, to review existing policy, legal and regulatory
frameworks in the mining sector and proposed rec-
ommendations that integrated gender parity in min-
ing policies.

In 2014, eca launched initiatives on the building of
climate resilience in 27 Member States, and increased
its support for climate change adaptation efforts to
small island developing States such as Cabo Verde, the
Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritius, Sao Tome and
Principe and Seychelles. Activities implemented in-
cluded research and capacity development in identifying
sustainable development choices, in line with the
recommendations set out in the Barbados Programme
of Action for Sustainable Development of Small
Island Developing States [YUN 1994, p. 783] and 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].

The subprogramme also led the preparations
for Africa’s participation in the third International
Conference on Small Island Developing States, in
September, and for the eca participation in the
Climate Summit, convened by the UN Secretary-
General in New York later that same month. At both
summit meetings, specific side events were organized
to ensure that Africa’s perspectives were given due
consideration.

The high point of the work of the African Climate
Policy Centre in 2014 was the organization, in Oc-
tober, of the fourth annual Conference on Climate
Change and Development in Africa, held in Mar-
rakech, Morocco, and attended by more than 400
participants who agreed that the subprogramme
would serve as the secretariat for the Climate Research
for Development platform.

Under the auspices of the Climate for Development
in Africa programme—a joint initiative of eca, auc
and the African Development Bank—an Africa Day
event was organized in Lima, Peru, during the twen-
tieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the
United Nations Framework Conference on Climate
Change, with the theme “Africa in the post-2015 new
climate agreement”.

Statistics

The objective of the eca work under this sub-
programme, managed by the Commission’s African
Centre for Statistics, was to improve national statistical
data and information for informed policymaking and
economic management. In 2014, the subprogramme
worked to enhance the capacity of Member States to
produce and disseminate high quality statistics.

During the year, eca and the African Development
Bank conducted evaluations of Member States’ first-
generation national strategies while promoting the
development of second-generation strategies. The
Comoros, Djibouti, Nigeria and Togo made progress
in developing legal frameworks and establishing au-
tonomous statistical agencies.

In January, the African project on the
implementation of the 2008 System of National
Accounts was officially launched by the African
Group on National Accounts under the auspices of the
Statistical Commission for Africa. The project dealt
with the challenges that African countries faced in
producing timely and good quality national accounts
and economic statistics. eca hosted the secretariat of
the project and oversaw coordination, monitoring,
evaluation and reporting.

During the year, eca led the training component
for improving agricultural and rural statistics. In Jan-
uary, the Commission organized a course for human
resource managers from agricultural statistics offices
to equip them with the necessary skills to design
human resource policies in support of agricultural
statistics. In all, 45 human resource officers from 23
countries participated. Another course for agricultural
statisticians was held in August.

The African Centre for Statistics continued to
provide leadership in the implementation of the
Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement
of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics. In Febru-
ary, the ninth session of the African Symposium on
Statistical Development was held in Gaborone, Botswana, and focused on promoting the use of civil registration and vital statistics in support of good governance in Africa. In April, a global meeting on civil registration and vital statistics was held in Addis Ababa. The meeting was co-hosted by ECA, the World Health Organization and the World Bank to discuss strengthening the civil registration and vital statistics system. A draft investment plan developed by the World Bank for scaling up the civil registration and vital statistics was also discussed.

In March, the 2014 edition of the African Statistical Yearbook, jointly produced by ECA, the African Development Bank and AUC, was submitted for review by representatives of 34 countries at an expert group meeting.

ECA designed and circulated posters, communiques and materials for African Statistics Day, which was widely celebrated on 18 November by the majority of African countries on the theme “Open data for accountability and inclusiveness”.

In December, the fourth meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa was held in Tunis, at which the Commission reviewed progress in the development of statistical systems, and identified statistical development issues requiring attention, including the data revolution in Africa and its implications for the post-2015 development agenda; the meeting was preceded by the sixth meeting of the Forum for African Statistical Development, whose theme was “Fostering coordination, collaboration and partnerships in support of statistical development in Africa”.

Along with other entities, ECA played a major role in encouraging African countries to undertake national censuses. During the year, the Commission, along with the African Development Bank, completed an assessment report of the 2010 round of censuses in Africa and presented it to the United Nations Statistical Commission and to the Statistical Commission for Africa in December. In addition to highlighting the unprecedented achievement by the continent, with 47 countries conducting at least one population and housing census in the 2010 round, the assessment report also drew attention to the use of technology and improved processing and dissemination of data and put forward key recommendations for the 2020 census round. Additionally, two technical manuals were produced in 2014: a handbook on the supply and use of tables and a guidebook on use of administrative data in national accounts.

During the year, ECA continued to improve the availability and use of geospatial information. The African Geodetic Reference Frame was designed to unify the many geodetic reference frames of Africa, taking data from a network of permanent global navigation satellite systems stations. The Commission finalized the logistical details for the roll-out of nearly 90 donated reference stations and agreed to install the stations in a number of countries all over the continent. In December, ECA, AUC and the international steering committee for the African Geodetic Reference Frame organized an expert meeting in Tunis in preparation for the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa.

The African Centre for Statistics also convened the inaugural meeting of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa. A transitional bureau was elected and four working groups established, with ECA serving as secretariat. Further, in 2014, the United Nations Statistics Division and the United Nations Cartographic Section revitalized the Second Level Administrative Boundaries dataset project. In that context, the Commission concluded a memorandum of understanding with Ethiopia on the sharing of the datasets.

### Capacity development

The aim of the subprogramme was to strengthen the capacity of Member States, pan-African institutions, regional economic communities and other intergovernmental organizations to formulate, implement and monitor evidence-based policies in support of Africa’s development. The responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies with the Capacity Development Division, which worked to strengthen the governance structure of the AU and its organs and to deepen regional integration within the context of AU Agenda 2063—agreed upon by the African leaders in 2013 through the Solemn Declaration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization of African Unity (YUN 2013, p. 896).

In 2014, ECA provided technical support to the AU and NEPAD related to Agenda 2063, including through research, advisory services, workshops and seminars, and supported the process of aligning existing national development plans with Agenda 2063.

ECA was also responsible for coordinating the work of UN agencies working in Africa, through the regional coordination mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa). In 2014, UN entities continued to improve the alignment of their programmes with those of AUC, the NEPAD Agency and the regional economic communities. At the fifteenth session of RCM-Africa (Abuja, 28–30 March), participants agreed to develop linkages between RCM-Africa, the subregional coordination mechanism, the Regional Directors Team of the United Nations Development Group and the UN country teams, in order to strengthen coherence and coordination.

In collaboration with the NEPAD Agency, UNDP and the AU, ECA supported the capacity-development mapping and scoping exercise carried out by the regional economic communities. In January, the AU Assembly,
at its twenty-second ordinary session, endorsed the scoping report.

The year also saw the alignment of RCM-Africa clusters with the AU strategic plan for 2014–2017 and Agenda 2063, with two major achievements: a study on the feasibility of a self-financing mechanism for regional integration in the Arab Maghreb Union, and a regional food security programme in East Africa covering six pilot countries and mainstreaming intelligent transport systems. Furthermore, throughout the year, RCM-Africa continued to implement demand-driven business plans focusing on key cluster activities. Subregional coordination mechanisms became operational in all ECA five subregions—Central Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa, and West Africa—with the mechanism for North Africa officially established in June.

In 2014, the Commission provided support to the secretariat of the NEPAD African Peer Review Mechanism [YUN 2003, p. 938] process for the harmonization of the national plans of action of Lesotho and Zambia; and assisted with concluding a memorandum of understanding between Senegal and the African Peer Review Panel, a road map for Senegal and a national action plan.

Following the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, ECA undertook a study on the economic and social impact of the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, which provided an important African analysis of the impact of the virus. The study resulted in a report that was launched in December in Niamey, Niger.

ECA also provided support for the development of sustainable tourism plans for Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda; in that context, a regional sustainable tourism plan was developed for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. In addition, ECA worked to determine the root causes of conflict in the Great Lakes Region, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa and the related development consequences.

**Technical cooperation**

Through technical cooperation, ECA translated its research work into operational activities for development. Funding for the ECA technical cooperation activities came from the United Nations Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation, the United Nations Development Account and extrabudgetary resources negotiated with bilateral and multilateral donors.

In 2014, Regular Programme funds provided technical assistance to four Member States and two regional economic communities to strengthen national development plans and design infrastructure policy frameworks.

As a capacity development programme of the UN Secretariat, the Development Account aimed at enhancing the capacities of developing countries in the priority areas of the Organization’s development agenda. Funded from the Secretariat regular budget and implemented by 10 entities of the Secretariat, Development Account projects at ECA served to link the normative and analytical work of the Commission to its operational activities. During the year, ECA developed four new Development Account projects in the areas of statistics and data; development planning processes; strengthening African development planners’ capacities for integrating the post-2015 development agenda into national development plans; and strengthening the monitoring of social protection in Member States.

**Gender and women in development**

Under this subprogramme, ECA aimed to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in the context of international and regional commitments.

During the year, one of the ECA goals was to ensure that women participated in and benefited equally from Africa’s structural transformation. In March, the continent-wide initiative for gender equality and women’s empowerment, developed by the ECA African Centre for Gender, was endorsed at the seventh Joint Annual Meetings of the Conference of Ministers, and informed the Commission’s 2014–2015 work programme on gender.

ECA Member States and regional economic communities reported a remarkable progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action [YUN 1995, p. 1170]. Against a target of 15 Member States, 52 countries reported on the progress made in implementing those instruments in their 20-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Commission’s summary report highlighted notable successes regarding the increased capabilities of women in social sectors, particularly primary education and health. The report was presented and endorsed at the ninth Regional Conference on Women, held in Addis Ababa in November. The outcome declaration of the Conference was a milestone in bringing Africa’s priorities into the global 20-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and in positioning gender equality and women’s empowerment at the centre of the post-2015 development agenda.

In the year, ECA increased the number of Member States and regional economic communities that made use of the knowledge generated through the African Gender and Development Index, gender statistics, gender-aware macroeconomic modelling, the African Women’s Rights Observatory and the e-network for national gender machineries. The Commission Member States participated in two e-discussions held to address the eradication of female genital mutilation: the African regional conference on the 20-year review
of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which took place in Addis Ababa in November; and the continent’s preparations for the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women to be held in early 2015. A fact sheet entitled “Ban female genital mutilation worldwide” was produced by the subprogramme, along with a web-based information map on female genital mutilation.

Considering women’s pivotal role in agriculture, the 2014 edition of the African Women’s Report highlighted that tackling gender inequality was a cost-effective way of transforming the continent’s agricultural sector, looking at six selected countries: Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mali, Morocco, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The Commission’s Compendium on Good Practices and Initiatives on Economic Empowerment of Women in Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Africa and the Report on Gender and Mining in Africa provided a better understanding of gender-responsive mining policies and practices. Following an expert review meeting in August, ECA also published a report on women in informal cross-border trade in Africa.

ECA also organized a hands-on capacity-building exercise on the integration of gender into socio-economic policies and public finance for African middle- and senior-level policymakers. Internally, the subprogramme finalized the development of the Commission’s own in-house gender mainstreaming programme.

**Subregional activities for development**

In 2014, the ECA subregional offices (Central Africa, Eastern Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa and West Africa) continued to assist Member States, regional economic communities and other subregional intergovernmental organizations in strengthening their capacity to formulate and harmonize evidence-based policies and plans in support of economic and social transformation and regional integration at the subregional level through research and analytical work, expert meetings and forums, and advisory services.

A priority for the subregional offices was the preparation of country profiles, which provided data, institutional and policy information, forecasts, indicators, policy and risk analysis, and recommendations on key social and economic variables. The profiles would provide policy analysis and forecasts from an African perspective to clients ranging from Member States to academics, policymakers, civil society representatives, analysts and investors from within and outside Africa.

**Development planning and administration**

The main objective of this subprogramme, managed by the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, was to improve public sector management in respect of economic policy planning and analysis, and development planning by African Governments and other associated development actors.

During the year, a total of 25 training courses, attended by 521 officials from 25 Member States, were organized by the Institute for the benefit of African countries on approaches for better integrating long-term development concerns and economic policy formulation. Further, experts, public officials, leaders and representatives of the private sector and civil society from 33 African countries participated in the Institute’s six high-level workshops on the African economic management and development. The Institute also carried out advisory missions to support policy reform efforts in Cameroon, Morocco, Nigeria and Rwanda, and one to the NEPAD secretariat in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The Institute published eight discussion papers as part of a special “Africa at 50” series, produced three episodes of a documentary series on development planning and developed new partnerships with several African institutions, including the Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute of East and Southern Africa, the Institute of National Planning of Egypt, the Pan-African Parliament, and the Bamanga Tukur African Institute for International Trade and Development.

**Social development**

The aim of the subprogramme was to formulate appropriate social development policies that promoted inclusive growth, specifically in the areas of employment and social protection, young people and population, urbanization and women’s empowerment. In 2014, the subprogramme focused on the transformational role that social development policy could play in support of the structural transformation of African economies. It also sought to leverage the synergy with the ECA divisions for macroeconomic policy, statistics and capacity-building, which resulted in a more integrated approach to social development policy research in Africa.

The creation of the African Social Development Index was a direct response to ECA Member States’ desire to assess the impact of exclusion on social development in Africa. The Index went through a validation process and was piloted in five Member States. Awareness-raising of the Index was done in collaboration with the subregional offices in Marrakech during the ninth African Development Forum, and in Lusaka, Zambia, and in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

The Social Development Policy Division conducted a study of health insurance in Rwanda and Ghana, which appeared in the African Social Development Report 2013—2014, and was intended to contribute to the critical issue of health financing in Member States. Further, in 2014, the subprogramme participated in
an interregional Development Account project to promote inclusive and sustainable youth policies, with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCAP), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Programme and organizational questions

Strategic framework for 2016–2017

In March, the Conference of Ministers had before it the ECA proposed strategic framework for the 2016–2017 biennium [E/ECA/COE/33/12], which featured fewer subprogrammes than in the past as a result of the ECA restructuring. While many of the priorities underpinning the biennial programme plan for 2016–2017 reflected continuity in the direction of the work carried out by ECA in the 2014–2015 biennium, a number of enhancements and refinements were made to the programme for 2016–2017 to address important emerging issues in support of Africa’s transformation. A key new feature of the strategic framework was the implementation of the priorities of the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.


Construction of office facilities

Report of Secretary-General. In August, pursuant to section I of General Assembly resolution 63/263 [YUN 2008, p. 1546], the Secretary-General provided an update [A/69/359] on the completion of the construction of additional office facilities at ECA headquarters in Addis Ababa and the full occupancy of the premises. It also presented the cost plan for finishing the remaining ancillary works and closing out in mid-2015. The Secretary-General requested an additional appropriation of $2,695,900 for the biennium 2014–2015 for an initial dedicated project management team and for consultancy services related to the proposed renovation of the Africa Hall Building. In addition, the Secretary-General proposed the establishment of an additional 18 security officer posts, effective 1 January 2015.

ACABQ Report. In October [A/69/415], the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that the remaining ancillary work was fully completed within the planned time frame—by June 2015—and avoid any further delay or cost escalation; the General Assembly approve 14 of the 18 additional security officer posts proposed to provide for safety and security for the new ECA office facilities; and the General Assembly approve the establishment of a multi-year special account for the duration of the Africa Hall renovation project.

Asia and the Pacific

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) held its seventieth session [E/2014/39] in Bangkok, Thailand, in two phases under the theme “Regional connectivity for shared prosperity”. Phase one was held on 23 May and phase two was held from 4 to 8 August.

The Commission discussed Asia-Pacific least developed, landlocked developing and Pacific Island developing countries [E/ESCAP/70/1–3, E/ESCAP/70/4 & Corr.1 & E/ESCAP/70/30 & Corr.1]; issues and challenges to inclusive and sustainable development [E/ESCAP/70/5 & Corr.1, 2]; progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions [E/ESCAP/70/6], regional economic cooperation and integration [E/ESCAP/70/7], poverty through alleviation through sustainable agriculture [E/ESCAP/70/8], trade and investment [E/ESCAP/70/9], transfer of technology [E/ESCAP/70/10], sustainable agricultural mechanization [E/ESCAP/70/11 & Rev.1], transport [E/ESCAP/70/12], environment and development [E/ESCAP/70/13], disaster risk reduction [E/ESCAP/70/14], information and communications technology [E/ESCAP/70/15], population and disabilities [E/ESCAP/70/16–17], statistics [E/ESCAP/70/18], special programme for Central Asian economies [E/ESCAP/70/19], report of the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum [E/ESCAP/70/28], and cross-border paperless trade [E/ESCAP/70/31].

The Committee also discussed management issues [E/ESCAP/70/20, E/ESCAP/70/22 & Rev.1], including programme changes for the biennium 2014–2015 [E/ESCAP/70/21 & Add.1], the programme performance for the biennium 2012–2013 [E/ESCAP/70/29] and the proposed strategic framework for the period 2016–2017 [A/69/6 (Prog.16)]; the establishment of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the development of disaster information management [E/ESCAP/70/23]; the activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission between May 2013 and March 2014 [E/ESCAP/70/24]; details of the seventy-first session of the Commission (2015) [E/ESCAP/70/25 & Rev.1]; the theme of the seventieth session of the Commission (2014) [E/ESCAP/70/27]; and policy issues [E/ESCAP/70/26 & E/ESCAP/70/33].
In 2014, the Commission adopted 14 resolutions and 28 decisions. The Commission endorsed “Balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: from integration to implementation” as the theme for its seventy-first session.

**Economic trends**

The summary [E/2015/18] of the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 2015* [Sales No. E.15.II.F.7] examined the economic growth performance and challenges in the region and stated that while growth had been more inclusive at the country level, large divergences of inclusiveness existed within countries between sexes and across the rural and urban sectors.

Real incomes per capita in developing economies of the region had doubled on average since the early 1990s. In Bhutan, Cambodia and Viet Nam, real income per capita had tripled, while in China it had grown more than sevenfold since 1990. Such impressive performances had lifted millions of people out of extreme poverty and had enabled the region as a whole to meet—ahead of the 2015 deadline—the first target of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): reducing by half the proportion of people whose income was less than $1.25 a day.

Economic growth, however, was not as high as it had been in the past. The growth potential of the region’s developing economies was being held back by infrastructure shortages and the excessive commodity-dependence of some economies. The fragile global economic recovery was an additional constraint. There was also concern that economic growth had not benefitted all equally. Income inequalities were large and widening in many countries, and if not addressed, intergenerational inequities had the potential to be perpetuated.

In view of those challenges, a number of policy considerations emerged. One was the need to establish an enabling policy and institutional environment to support the flow of innovative and equitable finance for implementing the sustainable development agenda. A second consideration was the need for well-thought-out macroprudential measures to manage capital volatility, thus supporting economic stability and providing a resilient platform for inclusive growth. The imperative for commodity-dependent economies to diversify their economies into other sectors was the third area that was investigated. Fourth, some innovative actions could be taken by economies in the region to better address climate change, particularly topical in preparation for the 2015 United Nations Conference on Climate Change.

Making economic growth more inclusive required strengthening the developmental role of the State. While Governments should create an enabling environment for the private sector to act as the main engine of growth, more efforts were needed to ensure equality of opportunities. There was a need for countries to ensure more equal access to education and health care, provide stronger social-safety nets, broaden access to financial services, particularly in rural sectors, and give greater attention to fostering employment, particularly through the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises and of rural industrialization.

**Policy issues**

The obstacles to higher growth in Asia and the Pacific were partly related to slow economic growth and policies in the developed world, but also to long-term structural domestic impediments, highlighting the need for countercyclical government macroeconomic policies that could support growth in the short term while helping to remove structural impediments in the long term. Some possible supportive measures were: increasing spending on social protection, which would help support growth and reduce inequality; addressing the significant infrastructure shortage across the region; increasing spending to address environmental factors, which would otherwise hamper growth prospects; investing in youth by improving education systems; and mitigating the volatility of capital flows.


**Activities**

**Least developed, landlocked developing and small island developing countries**

At its seventieth session, the Commission had before it a note by the ESCAP secretariat [E/ESCAP/70/1] summarizing the preparations for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which was scheduled to be held in Apia, Samoa, from 1 to 4 September. The theme of the Conference was “The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships”. Priorities for Pacific small island developing States in the lead-up to the Conference included economic management, climate change, sustainable energy, oceans and seas, health and non-communicable diseases, social development, including gender equality, and governance.

Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 [YUN 1992, p. 000], small island developing States were considered a special case due to the inherent challenges they faced in pursuing development and reducing poverty such as remoteness from major markets and population...
centres, limited resource and export base, exposure to external economic shocks and vulnerability to climate change. In the Pacific region only, there were 20 small island developing States out of a total of 51.

The first international conference on the sustainable development of small island developing States [YUN 1994, p. 783] resulted in the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (known as the “Barbados Programme of Action”) [ibid.]. In 2005, a second international conference [YUN 2005, p. 946] was held, which adopted the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States [ibid.]. The Third International Conference (the Samoa Conference) (see p. 000) in September 2014 was called for at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development [YUN 2012, p. 780] to assess the progress in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, seek a renewed political commitment by all countries to address the special needs of small island developing States, and identify challenges and priorities.

A preparatory process was established by the General Assembly, which involved meetings in each of the three regions of small island developing States—the Pacific, the Caribbean and the AIMS region (Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas) and an interregional meeting, organized with the assistance from the United Nations system. The interregional meeting was held in Barbados in August 2013 and its outcome document formed the basis for the draft outcome document of the Samoa Conference, which was initially negotiated at the first preparatory meeting in New York in February 2014 by all United Nations Member States. The preparatory process for the Samoa Conference outcome document also contributed to the development of priorities of small island developing States for the development agenda beyond 2015.

In another note [E/ESCAP/70/2], the ESCAP secretariat provided an overview of and recommendations on how Pacific small island developing States could conserve, sustainably manage and realize the benefits of fisheries in support of sustainable development.

The Commission also considered a review [E/ESCAP/70/3], provided by the ESCAP secretariat, of the progress made by the Asia-Pacific least developed countries in implementing the Programme of Action for the Decade 2011–2020 (also known as the Istanbul Programme of Action) [YUN 2011, p. 828] since the sixty-ninth session of the Commission [YUN 2013, p. 954]. The review showed that while some countries had made considerable progress, especially in enhancing transport connectivity both domestically and with neighbouring countries, much remained to be done. The document also contained a description of some of the challenges those countries faced, as well as a summary of activities undertaken by the ESCAP secretariat to assist them. At its seventieth session, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to organize the Asia-Pacific regional high-level policy dialogue on the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 [YUN 2011, p. 828] in early 2015 [E/2014/39 (res. 70/3)].

The Commission also had before it a summary of the status of the implementation of the Vientiane Consensus in the Asia-Pacific region [E/ESCAP/70/4 & Corr.1], providing an update on the topic since the Commission’s sixty-ninth session. In March 2013, the Asian European Final Regional Review of the Almaty Programme of Action for assisting landlocked developing countries was held in Vientiane, Lao People’s Democratic Republic. The outcome document of that meeting, the Vientiane Consensus, had identified priorities of the global review of the Almaty Programme of Action [YUN 2003, p. 875]. The trade structure of most of those landlocked developing countries was characterized by export baskets highly dominated by primary commodities; and those countries had become more exposed to commodity related risks, compared with a decade ago, making their economies more vulnerable to declines in world commodity prices. Their import baskets, on the other hand, were dominated by manufactured goods, indicating the need for creating a diversified manufacturing base, an area in which regional cooperation in trade and foreign direct investment could play a critical role. Under various kinds of arrangements, landlocked developing countries had made considerable progress in improving transport connectivity with neighbouring countries, as well as in enhancing domestic transport connectivity by improving and upgrading their transport networks. A number of projects had been planned or implemented involving the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway routes and other routes of international importance, including in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Progress had been also made by the landlocked developing countries in trade facilitation. For example, the time required to process exports in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic was reduced from 66 days in 2006 to 26 days in 2012. Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan experienced also the highest reduction in the number of documents required to process imports, which, for both, was down to 10 documents in 2012 from 18 documents in 2006.

The Committee also considered a secretariat note on the perspectives of Asia-Pacific least developed, landlocked developing and Pacific island developing countries in the context of the development agenda beyond 2015 [E/ESCAP/70/30 & Corr.1]. As the year
2015 approached, evaluations were being made to assess how countries were performing in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Although many countries in the Asia-Pacific region had made significant progress in achieving MDGs, the region’s least developed, landlocked developing and Pacific island developing countries had continued to face formidable challenges in realizing them. For example, while Goal 1 indicators on eradicating extreme hunger and poverty had, on the whole, been satisfactory, the indicator on the prevalence of underweight children showed that most of the least developed, landlocked developing and Pacific island developing countries were off track. The least developed countries as a whole were not making good progress in ensuring universal enrolment in primary education or its completion by those who did enroll. Further, the region was falling behind as regards improving child and maternal health, with primary health-care infrastructure still unable to meet needs. As far as environment-related targets were concerned, the trend in the Asia-Pacific region reflected success as regards most indicators, except in providing greater access to improved sanitation. Also, in several least developed, landlocked developing and Pacific island developing countries, forest cover was being depleted rather than conserved; considering the challenges that those countries were facing, it was critical to provide them with a new strengthened development agenda, with the support from international and regional partners.

**Issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission**

At its seventieth session, the Committee had before it a secretariat note providing an overview of the issues and challenges related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific [E/ESCAP/70/5 & Corr.1,2]. Those issues were addressed under eight headings: macroeconomic policy and inclusive development, including the activities of the Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture; trade and investment, including the activities of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology; transport; environment and development; information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction; including the activities of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development; social development; statistics, including the activities of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific; and subregional activities for development.

The Commission also considered a note by the secretariat containing a summary of progress in implementation of Commission resolutions [E/ESCAP/70/6].

**Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development**

While Asia and the Pacific continued to lead global economic growth, the region’s performance had been buffeted by weak demand and volatility in the financial markets. Regional and domestic demand, which earlier helped offset a decline in exports to advanced economies, lost some of its momentum in 2012 and 2013, owing to a transition to lower growth in regional powerhouses, such as China, and softer demand in countries where government and household debt had increased. In India and Indonesia, monetary tightening, aimed at curbing inflation and stopping currency depreciation, also held back growth. Moreover, the region remained home to more than 700 million people living on less than $1.25 a day and some one billion workers in poorly paid jobs with low security. The gap between the rich and the poor widened, limiting further gains in poverty reduction and social development and undermining the foundations for future growth. Infrastructure shortages were severe, contributing to inflationary pressures as supply failed to keep pace with demand.

In the light of that, ESCAP had recommended a wide range of policy options which fell under the umbrella of “forward-looking macroeconomic policies”, which included management of short-term capital and a monetary framework. On the fiscal front, countries were encouraged to look beyond deficit and debt and focus more on composition and quality of public expenditures, committing more to social investments important for long-term growth.

There was ample evidence that agriculture could drive inclusive growth and poverty reduction, particularly in the poorest countries. The agriculture sector, however, needed a major transformation in order to be able to provide adequate nutritious food, income and decent jobs to a growing population, while also addressing environmental challenges and sustaining progress towards eradicating poverty. Central to that transformation was a systemic shift to more sustainable food systems. In that context, the Commission adopted a resolution [E/2014/39 (res. 70/6)] on promoting sustainable agricultural development in Asia and the Pacific through technology transfer.

The Commission considered the report of the Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 17–18 December 2013) [E/ESCAP/70/7]. The Conference adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific, in which members and associate members resolved to work together to pursue enhanced regional economic cooperation in four areas: creating an integrated market; developing seamless connectivity; enhancing financial cooperation; and increasing economic and technical cooperation to address shared vulnerability and risks.
The Commission had also before it the report of the Governing Council of the Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA) on its tenth session (Bangkok, 13 December 2013) [E/ESCAP/70/8]. During the meeting, the Council reviewed the activities of CAPSA in 2013, including progress in implementing the Network for Knowledge Transfer on Sustainable Agricultural Technologies and Improved Market Linkages in South and Southeast Asia (SATNET Asia), and the administrative and financial status of CAPSA in 2013.

The Governing Council was informed that SATNET Asia, which aimed at strengthening South-South dialogue and intraregional learning on sustainable agricultural technologies and trade, had entered its second year of implementation. CAPSA facilitated training for approximately 500 participants. Through knowledge-sharing events, SATNET Asia was building capacity among researchers and extension workers to better transfer knowledge on sustainable agricultural technologies and trade to farmers. The Governing Council endorsed the proposed financial plan and the workplan of CAPSA for 2014 and recommended that CAPSA continue its work in policy advocacy and networking in sustainable agriculture, data collection, storage and analysis.

The Commission endorsed the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific [E/2014/39 (res. 70/1)].

Trade and investment

The Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report, 2013 had introduced a new concept called “inclusive trade and investment”, whose central message to policymakers was that trade and investment would continue to play an essential role in reducing poverty and triggering growth, while stressing the need for complementary policies that spread the benefits of trade-led growth more fairly. In particular, more attention should be given to the impact of trade and investment policies on, among other things, productivity, access to employment and wages at the formulation stage. Business was assuming an ever-increasing role in addressing inclusive and sustainable growth. Many businesses in the region, however, had yet to adopt sustainable business practices along accepted international standards. The transfer and effective development and utilization of clean and green technologies played a central role in the development of innovation-based competitiveness, while ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth. In that regard, there was a need to strengthen innovation management and technology transfer capabilities of Member States.

The Commission had before it the report of the Committee on Trade and Investment on its third session [E/ESCAP/70/9]; the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its ninth session [E/ESCAP/70/10]; the report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its ninth session [E/ESCAP/70/11 & Rev.1]; and the report of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade [E/ESCAP/70/31].

The Committee on Trade and Investment recommended that those organizations providing technical assistance activities in the Asia-Pacific region in the area of trade and investment coordinate their activities with the ECLAC secretariat in order to use resources efficiently, maximize synergies and avoid duplication.

The Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology endorsed the proposed programme of work of the Centre for 2014 and advised the Centre to raise its profile among government ministries and institutions in the Asia-Pacific region by highlighting the important role it played. Particular focus should be placed on countries that had not engaged in any recent activities with the Centre. Taking note of the administrative, financial and human resources of the Centre, the Governing Council reiterated that there was a need for member countries to enhance their annual contribution of $30,000 for developing countries and $7,000 for least developed countries.

The Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization reviewed reports of the Centre covering its work in 2013 and its administrative and financial status. It endorsed the five roles of the Centre identified in 2013 as a result of a strategic repositioning—to serve as a regional forum for policy dialogues; a data and information hub; a reference point for standards and protocols; a centre for capacity-building; and a platform to facilitate interregional agribusiness development and trade and adopted the terms of reference of the Asia-Pacific Network for the Testing of Agricultural Machinery.

The Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade (Bangkok, 22–24 April), reviewed and revised the draft agreement/framework arrangement on facilitating cross-border paperless trade. It also requested ESCAP to endorse the establishment of an interim intergovernmental steering group on cross-border paperless facilitation, which would be tasked, inter alia, with further improving the draft text of the regional arrangement as a potential intergovernmental agreement; and preparing a draft road map for the implementation of substantive provisions in the draft text.

In that context, ECLAC adopted two resolutions: one on strengthening regional cooperation and capacity for enhanced trade and investment in support of sustainable development [E/2014/39 (res. 70/5)]; and one on the implementation of the decision of the Ad Hoc
Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade [res. 70/6].

Transport

Transport-led regional connectivity played a key role in regional and subregional integration, economic and trade cooperation. To promote regional connectivity, high-quality, reliable and integrated transport infrastructure and services that supported sustainable and inclusive development were required. The Asia-Pacific region had a high negative growth effect from lost productivity resulting from urban congestion, as well as from the pollution-related health costs and the direct and indirect costs of road crashes. With those issues in mind, the Commission considered the report of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport at its second session [E/ESCAP/70/12] held in Bangkok in November 2013 and adopted the Ministerial Declaration on Transport as a Key to Sustainable Development and Regional Integration. The Declaration served as a broad framework for the future direction of the ESCAP secretariat’s work in collaboration with member countries and institutional partners to put in place policies aimed at developing efficient transport. That work would include continued implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012–2016) and the promotion of three intergovernmental agreements, namely, the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports [YUN 2013, p. 957], which was opened for signature at the forum and was signed by 14 countries and ratified by Thailand; the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network [YUN 2006, p. 1161]; and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network [YUN 2003, p. 1010].

The Commission adopted two resolutions on transport. One endorsed the Suva Declaration on Improving Maritime Transport and Related Services in the Pacific [E/2014/39 (res. 70/7)], which had been adopted at the at the High-level Meeting on Strengthening Inter-island Shipping and Logistics in the Pacific Island Countries (Suva, Fiji, 23–25 July 2013); and the other [res. 70/8], endorsed the Ministerial Declaration on Transport as a Key to Sustainable Development and Regional Integration adopted at the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport (Bangkok, 4–8 November 2013).

Environment and development

While economic growth had supported significant development gains, the hidden costs—social, environmental and economic—of the resource-intensive economic growth had resulted in rapidly declining natural capital, climate-related impacts, and alarming trends related to energy security, water resource management and urbanization. Short-term growth strategies aimed at maximizing gross domestic product growth had created a “vicious cycle”—growth driven by the exploitation of human and natural capital. Achieving sustainable development depended on shifting to a “virtuous cycle” of investment in people and the planet, where economic growth was a means of achieving shared prosperity and human well-being, rather than a goal in itself. ESCAP had strengthened the capacity of the region to deal with the challenge of sustainable development by extending support to Member States, while its secretariat continued to work with national entities to deliver capacity and policy development.

Emerging economies accounted for more than 90 per cent of global net energy demand growth, with most of it coming from the Asia-Pacific region. Meanwhile, as at 2010, some 628 million people in the region were without access to electricity and 1.8 billion people were using traditional biomass. Between 1990 and 2010, an estimated 1.5 billion people in the region gained access to improved water sources; significant disparities, however, continued to exist between the proportion of the population with access to improved water sources in rural areas as compared to urban areas due to the high rates of economic development and urbanization.

The Commission had before it the report of the Committee on Environment and Development on its third session (Bangkok, 29–31 October 2013) [E/ESCAP/70/13]. The Committee reviewed emerging and persistent issues, including the environmental sustainability of economic growth, energy security, water resources management and sustainable urban development. The Committee also reviewed the progress made in implementing the outcomes of the sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific [YUN 2010, p. 976], together with preparations for the seventh Ministerial Conference and for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, which were to be held in 2015 and 2016, respectively.

The Committee made a number of recommendations, including recognizing that ESCAP was an appropriate platform for facilitating dialogue among Member States on regional implementation of the agenda for sustainable development, and linking the regional perspective to the ongoing global processes on the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the development agenda beyond 2015.

The Commission also considered the report of the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum (Vladivostok, Russian Federation, 27–30 May 2013) [E/ESCAP/70/28], which noted the progress achieved in the Asia-Pacific region in addressing the energy security challenges at the regional, national and household levels, and
reviewed opportunities for regional cooperation to promote enhanced energy security and the sustainable use of energy. The Forum adopted the Ministerial Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Enhanced Energy Security and the Sustainable Use of Energy in Asia and the Pacific: Shaping the Future of Sustainable Energy in Asia and the Pacific; and its Plan of Action, 2014–2018. The Forum recommended to the Commission the endorsement of its outcomes and invited the Executive Secretary to review periodically the progress of implementation of the Plan of Action and to take the necessary decisions in that regard. The Commission endorsed the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Forum [E/2014/39 (res. 70/9)]; recognized the adoption of the Bangkok Declaration of the Asia-Pacific region on the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015 [E/2014/39 (res. 70/10)]; welcomed the inaugural session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, held in Thailand in May [res. 70/11]; and encouraged the strengthening efforts on human settlements and sustainable urban development for the Asia-Pacific region [res. 70/12].

**Information and communications technology**

Despite the innovative digital opportunities unleashed by broadband Internet and other information and communications technologies (ICTs), the Asia and the Pacific region remained the most digitally divided region in the world. For example, in the Republic of Korea, 99.6 per cent of young people had been active on the Internet for at least five years while, in Timor-Leste, that figure was less than 1 per cent.

A key barrier to the universal uptake of broadband Internet in Asia and the Pacific was the high cost of international bandwidth, attributed to weaknesses in the overall ICT infrastructure in the region, including reliance on sea-based optical fiber, fragmented land-based ICT infrastructure and a lack of sufficient cross-border connectivity. Most of the region’s broadband connectivity had been developed in a hub-and-spoke configuration around technologically advanced countries, while the role of point-to-point connectivity utilizing land-based infrastructure remained limited. As a result, competition among suppliers was weak and bandwidth in the region was still significantly more expensive than in Europe and North America. In the light of those challenges, the ESCAP secretariat developed, in partnership with the International Telecommunication Union, the first regional map of Internet backbone networks in Asia and the Pacific. The map provided detailed route information for all the major fiber-optic networks in the region and was digitally superimposed onto the Asian Highway and Asian Trans-Railway maps. In addition, the map showed areas where key ICT infrastructure might be missing, as well as opportunities for synchronized planning and deployment of ICT and transport infrastructure, thus furnishing a crucial tool for policymakers. The ESCAP secretariat also carried out detailed broadband infrastructure studies and stakeholder consultations in South-East Asia and Central Asia, and planned to conduct similar activities in South Asia and in East Asia.

The Commission also considered the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT) on its eighth session (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 12 December 2013) [E/ESCAP/70/15]. The Governing Council recognized the wide range of programmes and services the Centre had developed to address the capacity-building needs in the region and noted the increasing demand for the APCICT programmes not only in Asia and the Pacific, but also from around the world.

The Governing Council endorsed the APCICT work plan for 2014 and recommended that APCICT expand its programmes to address the needs of vulnerable groups. It requested the Centre to continue its analytical review of ICT for development indicators and to develop a comprehensive media strategy to enhance the visibility of the Centre. The Governing Council called upon Member States to contribute to APCICT, including in-kind, in order to support its operations.

**Disaster risk reduction**

Regarding ICT and disaster risk reduction, the Asia and the Pacific continued to be the region most affected by frequent, intense and increasingly unpredictable disasters. It was, therefore, critical to take full advantage of progress in science and technology—areas in which the region excelled. While space and geographic information system (GIS) applications had proven effective in monitoring, providing early warning and facilitating emergency response during disasters and had become more affordable, the spread of such technologies had been uneven, not fully benefitting the region’s most vulnerable. In many developing countries, those technologies continued to be underutilized due to lack of human, scientific and technological capacity, as well as of institutional resources and expertise. Since the sixty-ninth session [YUN 2013, p. 954] of the Commission, its secretariat had provided a series of training on the effective use of GIS applications for disaster risk reduction and sustainable development, which had benefited approximately 400 policymakers and practitioners from almost 30 developing countries in the region. In the area of ICT for disaster risk management, the secretariat strengthened its partnership with the regional institutions. An online knowledge platform provided a range of interactive tools, including an inventory of vulnerability and risk assessments, georeferenced data and images from disaster-affected areas, and a comprehensive database of programmes and policies that enabled planning authorities to mainstream disaster risk management principles, concepts and practices into development processes.
The Committee had before it the report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its third session (Bangkok, 27–29 November 2013) [E/ESCAP/70/14]. The Committee emphasized that building resilience to natural disasters was one of the most pressing contemporary challenges facing Asia and the Pacific and underscored the importance of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into planning and finance ministries. It also emphasized the importance of space andGIS applications in disaster risk reduction and disaster response. The Committee recommended action by ESCAP in several matters, including requesting the secretariat: to prepare a regional strategy for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development plans; to work towards monitoring the resilience of Member States to disasters through the development, inter alia, of a core set of disaster-related statistics; to strengthen regional support to assist Member States in using space-based information for supporting disaster risk reduction, impact assessment and reconstruction, and drought monitoring and early warning; and to continue to provide near real-time satellite data and imagery to the Member States affected by severe disasters. The Committee also called on Member States to consider contributing financial support to the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries.

The Commission had before it the report of the sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference (Bangkok, 16–20 September 2013) [E/ESCAP/70/16], held in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund. The Conference aimed, inter alia, at reviewing population and development trends in the Asia and the Pacific region and adopted the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development.

The Committee had before it also the road map for the Implementation of the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific [YUN 2013, p. 959] [E/ESCAP/70/17]. The road map identified action at the regional, subregional and national levels, as well as the respective key actors; and proposed a time frame covering the period from 2013 to 2017. The initial draft road map was submitted for review to the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022, which was established by the Commission in 2013. The first session of the Working Group was held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, on 25 and 26 February 2014.

In the context of social development, the Commission adopted a resolution on enhancing participation of youth in sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific [E/2014/39 (res. 70/14)].

Statistics

With regard to statistics, some highlights during 2014 were the Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 24–28 November), and the fourth session of the ESCAP Committee of Statistics (Bangkok, 16–18 December). In recognition of the importance of statistics training for achieving its goals, the Committee on Statistics decided to establish a body, the Network, to oversee the coordination of statistical training in the region, with the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific serving as its secretariat. The overall role of the Network was to support the development programmes pursued by the Committee by facilitating information-sharing and promoting coordination among national, regional and international statistical training providers and donor agencies. The Network would build on existing partnerships, and work with agricultural training and research institutes participating in the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan to implement the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics.

The ESCAP secretariat also assisted Member States in meeting the need for more comprehensive and gender-sensitive statistics on women and men, initially through the development of a core set of gender statistics and indicators for the region. The first round of consultations on the preliminary draft set was conducted at a regional workshop held in Bangkok in November 2013.

The Commission also decided to establish an expert group comprising statisticians and disaster risk reduction experts [E/2014/39 (res. 70/2)], which were to report to the Committee on Statistics in 2014 and to the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015.
At its seventieth session, the Commission had before it the report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its ninth session [E/ESCAP/70/18], at which the Council commended the Institute for attaining the key results set out in its programme of work for the period 1 October 2012 to 30 September 2013. Through 17 courses/workshops, 440 government statisticians and officials of planning, health, agriculture and labour ministries of 44 countries and their respective institutions improved the quality of statistical outputs and increased their use for planning, policy formulation and the monitoring of development goals.

The Governing Council also expressed appreciation for the successful deployment of more e-learning courses and the Institute’s use of blended learning in some trainings. It recommended that the Institute accelerate further the delivery of online training and continue to work on creating a collaborative open online course platform for developing and delivering online statistical training.

Noting the expected increased demand for statistics in monitoring the development agenda beyond 2015, the Council advised the Institute to consider expanding its training activities to cover new topics related to, among other things, governance, big data and sustainable development.

Subregional activities for development

The four ESCAP subregional offices (Pacific, East and North-East Asia, North and Central Asia, and South and South-West Asia) continued to assist Member States in several areas including strengthening and measuring regional integration, improving environmental sustainability, addressing socioeconomic disparities within national borders and promoting disaster resilient societies.

The Commission had before it the report of the Governing Council of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) on its eighth session [E/ESCAP/70/19], at which the Council expressed support for the inclusion of the development priorities of the SPECA countries—Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—into the development agenda beyond 2015; and approved the Joint Statement of the 2013 SPECA Economic Forum (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 19–21 November 2013). The Council also adopted SPECA workplan for 2014–2015 and called upon relevant Un agencies and programmes, as well as the donor community, to actively participate in the implementation and financing of projects contained therein.

Programme and organizational questions

The Commission had before it the programme changes for the biennium 2014–2015 [E/ESCAP/70/21 & Add.1], the programme performance for the biennium 2012–2013 [E/ESCAP/70/29]; and the proposed strategic framework for the period 2016–2017 [A/69/6 (Prog. 16)]. The programme changes for the biennium 2014–2015 were designed to address new mandates adopted after the Commission’s endorsement of the programme of work for 2014–2015, and had no additional regular programme budget implications.

The programme performance for the biennium 2012–2013 provided an account of the ESCAP performance for the biennium in question as assessed against the expected accomplishments set out in the strategic framework for each subprogramme. The report was central to holding ESCAP accountable to its members and associate members regarding the efficient use of resources and the delivery of mandated results. The report was reviewed by the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission at its 353rd session, which was held on 24 March (see p. 000).

The proposed strategic framework for the period 2016–2017 covered the first biennium of the UN development agenda beyond 2015. Its strategic direction was derived from internationally agreed development mandates, including the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development [YUN 2012, p. 782], which emphasized the role of the regional commissions in promoting the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development; General Assembly resolution 67/226 [YUN 2012, p. 859] on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which called for the adoption of collaborative approaches to support country-level development initiatives; and Commission resolution 69/1 [YUN 2013, p. 954] on a conference structure of the Commission for the inclusive and sustainable development of Asia and the Pacific.

The strategic framework comprised eight interconnected subprogrammes that reflected the priorities of Member States. It built on the achievements of the previous biennium and reflected the vital role of ESCAP in implementing the development pillar of the United Nations, while focusing on enhanced organizational effectiveness and attainment of measurable results.

Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives

The Commission had before it the report [E/ESCAP/70/24] of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission on the activities of the Committee between May 2013 to March 2014. Topics discussed included the outcome of the sixty-ninth session [YUN 2013, p. 954] of ESCAP and the relevant resolutions and decisions; the review of the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016–2017; and the work of the secretariat in...
the subregions. The Advisory Committee provided important advice and guidance on key issues concerning ESCAP, including the organization of various intergovernmental meetings and initiatives; and highlighted the need for stronger measures to ensure fuller implementation of ESCAP resolutions, improved coordination among all relevant stakeholders and progress on the economic and social agenda of the Commission, in accordance with the development priorities of Member States.

Europe

The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region included 56 Member States, with very different levels of development and economic situations: the world’s advanced economies (Canada and the United States; the eurozone countries; and other advanced European economies), and a number of low- and lower-middle income economies among the European and Central Asian countries with economies in transition (new European Union member States that had not yet joined the eurozone; non-European Union countries in South-Eastern Europe, including Turkey; and countries belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Georgia).

The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) did not meet in 2014. Its sixty-sixth session was scheduled for 2015.

Economic trends

A report on the economic situation in the ECE region, including Europe, North America and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) [E/2015/16], indicated that the economic performance in the region improved somewhat in 2014, with gross domestic product (GDP) growth accelerating to 1.8 per cent from 1.2 per cent in 2013. There were, however, marked differences across subregions. The decline in oil prices was supporting the global recovery, including in most countries in the ECE region. For a number of energy-exporting economies in the CIS, however, that development represented a significant shock.

Countries with economies in transition suffered a downturn during the year. In South and Eastern Europe, that development reflected the impact of major natural disasters. In the CIS, the conflict in Ukraine and related geopolitical tensions contributed to a decline in GDP growth from 2.0 to 0.7 per cent. Sanctions against the Russian Federation by the United States and the conflict in Ukraine increased financing costs and undermined confidence. Falling oil prices, however, were the main factor affecting economic performance. Diminished economic prospects in the Russian Federation had a negative impact on other CIS countries through trade, investment and remittances channels. Currencies in the Commonwealth weakened sharply in late 2014 as a result of lower energy prices, capital outflows and the transmission of shocks across the subregion.

In the eurozone, there was a modest return to growth, which posted a 0.8 per cent GDP increase. After years of austerity, fiscal policy was becoming less of a drag on economic activity. Growth rates, however, across the eurozone varied widely and, despite some progress, financial fragmentation remained.


Activities

Trade

The Committee on Trade at its sixth session (Geneva, 10–12 February) [ECE/TRADE/C/2014/2] featured a high-level segment titled “Increasing the participation of transition economies in international trade”, under which the following topics were discussed: recent achievements in removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the Caucasus and the Balkans [ECE/TRADE/C/2014/3], with country studies focused on Tajikistan [ECE/TRADE/C/2014/4] and Belarus [ECE/TRADE/C/2014/4]; the review of the 2005 reform of the ECE and General Assembly budget decisions [ECE/TRADE/NONE/2014/3 & Rev.1]; the ECE activities in support of the Aid-for-Trade processes in the countries of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECa) and other countries with economies in transition [ECE/TRADE/C/2014/6–8]; ECE cooperation with other organizations [ECE/TRADE/C/2014/9 & Corr.1] and the ECE contribution to trade development in transition economies: other programmes [ECE/TRADE/C/2014/10]. Also reviewed were the programmes of work for the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, including the biennial evaluation report for 2012–2013 [ECE/TRADE/C/2014/12], the programme of work 2014–2015 [ECE/TRADE/C/2014/13–15] and the draft strategic framework 2016–2017 [ECE/TRADE/NONE/2014/1]; as well as an overview of the ECE Committee on Trade and the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration [ECE/TRADE/NONE/2014/2].

Forestry

The seventy-second session of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (Kazan, Russian Federation, 8–21 November) [ECE/TIM/2014/2] focused
on the implementation of the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy [YUN 2013, p. 963] [ECE/TIM/2014/4] and showcased how actors within and outside the forest sector had contributed to the emerging green economy in the region [ECE/TIM/2014/5]. The Committee also discussed the “Forests for Fashion” event [ECE/TIM/2014/6], which took place on 21 March—the International Day of Forests—and analysed the challenges and possibilities of sustainable wood-based fibres; a study on forest ownership in the ECE region [ECE/TIM/2014/7], as well as a questionnaire on the same topic [ECE/TIM/2014/INF.4]; the role of forests in the post-2015 agenda [ECE/TIM/2014/8]; the review of the Committee’s 2014 activities and planned activities for 2015 [ECE/TIM/2014/9], and the biennial evaluation report for 2012–2013 of the Forestry and Timber Subprogramme [ECE/TIM/2014/10]; the implementation of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) projects [ECE/TIM/2014/11]; the draft rules of procedure of the Committee [ECE/TIM/2014/12]; the report of the joint thirty-sixth session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)/ECE Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management (Geneva, 17–18 June) [ECE/TIM/EFC/WP.2/2014/2]; the outcome of the first meeting of the FAO/ECE Team of Specialists on Forest Policy (Krakow, Poland, 16–18 September) [ECE/TIM/2014/INF.1]; the global and regional reporting on forests and sustainable forest management by the FAO Forestry and Timber Section [ECE/TIM/2014/INF.2]; the region’s contribution to the eleventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests [ECE/TIM/2014/INF.3]; draft policy issues for the following round of outlook studies [ECE/TIM/2014/INF.5]; and the implementation of the ECE/FAO Regional Forum on Cross-boundary Fire Management, which had taken place in Geneva in November 2013 [ECE/TIM/2014/INF.6].

Transport

The Inland Transport Committee (ITC), at its seventy-sixth session (Geneva, 25–27 February) [ECE/TRANS/240 & Corr.1] considered, among other topics, a draft programme of its policy segment on innovations for sustainable inland transport and mobility [ECE/TRANS/2014/3]; sustainable urban transport and mobility in the ECE region [ECE/TRANS/2014/2]; sustainable transport in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda [ECE/TRANS/2014/3]; myths and realities of air pollutants emitted by diesel engine exhausts [ECE/TRANS/2014/4]; progress of the For Future Inland Transport Systems (ForeITS) global project [ECE/TRANS/2014/5]; climate change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks [ECE/TRANS/2014/6]; activities promoting innovative transport technologies and status of implementation of the Intelligent Transport Services Road Map [ECE/TRANS/2014/7], launched at the seventy-fourth session of the Inland Transport Committee [YUN 2012, p. 975]; implementation of the project on customs-to-customs electronic document exchange [ECE/TRANS/2014/8]; strengthening the transport capacity of countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia, in particular landlocked countries [ECE/TRANS/2014/9]; the 10-year comprehensive review of the Almaty Programme of Action [ECE/TRANS/2014/10]; progress report on phase III (2013–2017) of the Euro-Asian Transport Links project [ECE/TRANS/2014/11]; the road safety [ECE/TRANS/2014/13] and road transport activities [ECE/TRANS/2014/14]; proposal made by the Russian Federation on the development of a new convention on the facilitation of crossing of frontiers for passengers and baggage carried by rail [ECE/TRANS/2014/15]; a unified railway law [ECE/TRANS/2014/16]; International Maritime Organization (IMO)/International Labour Organization (ILO)/ECE Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTU Code) [ECE/TRANS/2014/17]; border-crossing facilitation and relevant legal instruments [ECE/TRANS/2014/18]; TIR Convention crisis in the Russian Federation (pertaining to the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets) [ECE/TRANS/2014/19]; activities by the Committee’s subsidiary bodies in 2013 [ECE/TRANS/2014/20], as well as results of the meetings of the Committee’s Bureau in 2013 [ECE/TRANS/2014/21].

The Committee also approved the programme performance assessment for 2012–2013 (biennial evaluation) of the Transport subprogramme [ECE/TRANS/2014/22 & Corr.1]; the subprogramme’s programme of work for the biennium 2014–2015 [ECE/TRANS/2014/23]; and the subprogramme’s biennial evaluation plan (2014–2015) [ECE/TRANS/2014/24]. Furthermore, the Committee endorsed its own draft work plan for the period 2014–2018 [ECE/TRANS/2014/26]; took note of the information about the publication results in the 2012–2013 biennium [ECE/TRANS/2014/27]; adopted its schedule of meetings in 2014 and from January to March 2015 [ECE/TRANS/2014/28]; and was informed about the most important legislative and policy initiatives in the field of transport undertaken by the European Union in 2013 [ECE/TRANS/2014/29].

Energy

In line with the “Sustainable Energy for All” initiative of the Secretary-General [YUN 2013, p. 982], the Committee on Sustainable Energy focused its twenty-third session (Geneva, 19–21 November) [ECE/ENERGY/96] on energy for sustainable development with a view to providing access to affordable and clean energy to all and helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the carbon footprint of the energy sector. The session consisted of a high-level segment, high-level thematic discussions and a general segment.
The theme of high-level segment was “Energy for sustainable development: must reality conflict with ambition?”. The ECE Executive Secretary noted that it would be necessary, by 2030, to ensure universal access to sustainable modern energy services for all; increase the share of renewable energy; double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; facilitate access to clean energy research and technologies; and expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries.

Following a presentation by the International Energy Agency and the report of the Director of the Sustainable Energy Division on the first session of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency (Geneva, 17–18 November), the Committee endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of that meeting, including the workplan of the Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency for 2014–2015.

The Committee then held discussions on the role of fossil fuels in delivering a sustainable energy future [ECE/ENERGY/2014/5/Rev.1 & ECE/ENERGY/2014/6]; ways in which renewable energy could help optimize energy systems [ECE/ENERGY/2014/7]; matters related to the future work of the Committee [ECE/ENERGY/2014/1–4]; and adoption of the report of the Committee’s twenty-third session [ECE/ENERGY/2014/96].

Environment

The Committee on Environmental Policy, at its twentieth session (Geneva, 28–31 October) [ECE/CEP/2014/2], discussed the outcomes of the work of its Bureau from November 2013 to June 2014 [ECE/CEP/2014/3]; the opening of the ECE environmental instruments and their promotion beyond the region [ECE/CEP/2014/6]; multilateral environmental agreements: overview of national implementation reporting [ECE/CEP/2014/16]; revised guidelines for developing national strategies to use soil contamination monitoring as an environmental policy tool [ECE/CEP/2014/14]; targets and performance indicators for measuring progress in developing the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) [ECE/CEP/2014/8] — a system that would link all the existing data and information flows relevant at the country and international levels in support of the regular environmental assessment process tool; and the outcomes of the work of the SEIS Group of Friends from March to July [ECE/CEP/2014/7]; the extension of the mandates of: the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment [ECE/CEP/2014/11], the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators [ECE/CEP/2014/12] and the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews [ECE/CEP/2014/13]; lessons learned from the Environment for Europe mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes [ECE/CEP/2014/10]; the ECE/United Nations Environment Programme report on greening the economy in the pan-European region [ECE/CEP/2014/5]; and the proposed framework for preparing the eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in 2016 [ECE/CEP/2014/9].

The Committee also had before it the biennial performance plan of the Environment subprogramme for 2014–2015 [ECE/CEP/2014/4].

Economic cooperation and integration

The eighth session of the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration (Geneva, 12–14 February) [ECE/CECI/2014/2] focused on programmes on innovation and public-private partnerships for infrastructure development. The session featured, inter alia, a high-level substantive segment on the emerging landscape for innovation and public-private partnerships financing; a high-level substantive segment on Innovation Performance Review of Armenia; a review of the implementation of the programme of work since its seventh session; and a discussion on the programme of work and draft strategic framework.

The Committee considered, among others, the report on the sixth session of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies (Geneva, 10–11 October) [ECE/CECI/ICP/2013/1]; good practices and policy recommendations on innovation in the public sector [ECE/CECI/2014/3] and on aligning entrepreneurship and innovation policies [ECE/CECI/2014/9]; the report on the fifth session of the Team of Specialists on Public-Private Partnerships [ECE/CECI/PPP/2013/2]; and a report on capacity-building activities [ECE/CECI/2014/4]. In 2014, the work of the Team of Specialists on Intellectual Property was discontinued, as the Team’s mandate had expired.

The Committee also considered a draft programme of work of the subprogramme on Economic Cooperation and Integration for 2014–2015 [ECE/CECI/2014/5]; the biennial performance evaluation of the Subprogramme for 2012–2013 [ECE/CECI/2014/6]; the Committee’s biennial evaluation plan 2014–2015 [ECE/CECI/2014/7]; the publication plan for 2014–2015 [ECE/CECI/2014/8]; and the draft rules of procedure of the Committee [ECE/CECI/2014/10].

Housing and land

The Committee on Housing and Land Management, at its seventy-fifth session (Geneva, 8–9 October) [ECE/HBP/2014/79], discussed the work of the Bureau of the Committee and the main decisions taken since the Committee’s seventy-fourth session [ECE/HBP/2014/1]; the draft Geneva Charter on Sustainable Housing in the ece region [ECE/HBP/2014/2]; the biennial evaluation report for the period 2012–2013 [ECE/HBP/2014/3]; a proposal for developing a study on standards related to energy efficiency in buildings and disaster risk reduction...
[ECE/HBP/2014/4]; the draft terms of reference of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group for 2015–2016 [ECE/HBP/2014/5]; a proposal for the development of a policy brief on spatial planning [ECE/HBP/2014/6]; and the Rules of Procedure for the Committee [ECE/HBP/2014/7], which were based on the Guidelines on Procedures and Practices for ECE Bodies.

Statistics

The sixty-second plenary session of the Conference of European Statistics (Paris, 9–11 April) [ECE/CES/87] discussed matters arising from the 2014 session of the United Nations Statistical Commission; the value of official statistics [ECE/CES/2014/20–22, ECE/CES/2014/32, ECE/CES/2014/20/50] and strategies for communicating the value of official statistics [ECE/CES/2014/23–25, ECE/CES/2014/33–35]; measuring recent and changing migration patterns [ECE/CES/2014/26–28, ECE/CES/2014/36–43]; methods to improve the measurement of migration [ECE/CES/2014/29–31, ECE/CES/2014/44–49, 52]; the work of the High-level Group for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services [ECE/CES/2014/1–3, 51], set up in 2010; indicators of gender equality [ECE/CES/2014/4 & Add.1,2]; recommendations on climate change-related statistics [ECE/CES/2014/5 & Add.1,2]; a guide to measuring global production in the national accounts and balance of payments statistics [ECE/CES/2014/6, Add.1–3]; role of official statistics with regard to leading, composite and sentiment indicators [ECE/CES/2014/10 & Add.1, ECE/CES/2014/11 & Add.1]; outcomes of the in-depth reviews (e.g., of big data and entrepreneurship statistics) carried out by the Conference Bureau [ECE/CES/2014/7 & Add.1, ECE/CES/2014/8 & Add.1, ECE/CES/2014/9 & Add.1, ECE/CES/2014/11 & Add.1]; the follow-up to the 2013 Conference seminars on challenges in implementing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and measuring sustainable development [ECE/CES/2014/12]; and challenges in providing access to micro-data for research [ECE/CES/2014/13].

The Conference also considered the programme of work of the ECE Statistics subprogramme [ECE/CES/2014/14–17 & ECE/CES/2014/53], as well as topics for the seminars to be held during the 2015 plenary session of the Conference [ECE/CES/2014/18 & Add.1, ECE/CES/2014/19].

Latin America and the Caribbean

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), at its thirty-fifth session (Lima, Peru, 5–9 May) [E/2014/40], considered the document titled “Compacts for Equality: Towards a Sustainable Future” [LC/G.2586(SES.35/3)], which, along with the 2010 [YUN 2010, p. 988] and 2012 [YUN 2012, p. 977] documents, completed the trilogy on the subject of equality. The Commission also held a high-level seminar on the subject with four panels: the regional scenario; production, social and labour gaps; consumption patterns, the environment and natural resources; and compact for equality. A high-level dialogue was also held.

The Commission adopted 16 resolutions, including on the establishment of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean [res. 682(XXXV)] (see p. 000); on the admission of Sint Maarten as an ECLAC associate member [res. 683(XXXV)] (see p. 000); and on the venue of its thirty-sixth session [res. 689(XXXV)] (see p. 000). Resolutions on the following topics were also adopted: ECLAC calendar of conferences for the period 2015–2016 [res. 676(XXXV)]; the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in the first half of 2015 [res. 677(XXXV)]; the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [YUN 2000, p. 951], by which governments were requested to engage with statistical offices and institutes in the preparation of the national reports produced in the follow-up to summits, conferences and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals [res. 678(XXXV)]; the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning, by which the Commission decided to convene the twenty-fourth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Council for Planning in Guatemala on 19 and 20 June [res. 679(XXXV)]; the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee [res. 680(XXXV)]: the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean [res. 681(XXXV)], the eCLAC programme of work and priorities for the 2016–2017 biennium, by which the relevant programme of work was adopted in its totality, including the amendments proposed and the guidance provided by the resolutions adopted at the thirty-fifth session of the Commission [res. 684(XXXV)]; the eCLAC follow-up activities to the Millennium Development Goals and implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields [res. 685(XXXV)]; the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean [YUN 2012, p. 809], by which the Commission invited the countries in the region to participate actively in the fourth meeting of the focal points of the signatory countries of the Declaration on the application of Principle 10, held in November at the eCLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile [res. 686(XXXV)]; the regional dimension of the post-2015 development agenda, by which the Commission’s secretariat was requested to prepare a report identifying areas of convergence between the countries of the region as regards
issues to be covered under the post-2015 development agenda and to submit it to Peru in its capacity as Chair of the thirty-fifth session of the Commission [res. 687(XXXV)]; South-South cooperation, by which the Commission decided to convene the fourth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation in Lima during the second half of the year [res. 688(XXXV)]; the Lima Resolution, by which the Commission invited its secretariat to conduct studies and formulate policy proposals with a view to building national economic and social development capacities [res. 690(XXXV)]; and the Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, by which the Commission took note of the 2013 Montevideo Declaration from the Fourth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean [YUN 2013, p. 974] and of the Plan of Action 2013–2015 for the implementation of the Plan of Action (eLAC2015), and invited all Member States to attend the preparatory meeting for the fifth Ministerial Conference, to be held in Costa Rica during the year, and the Conference itself, to be held in Mexico in 2015 [res. 691(XXXV)].

Economic trends

According to the report titled “Situation and outlook for Latin America and the Caribbean 2014–2015” [E/2015/19], the region’s economy, in 2014, continued the slowdown that began after the upturn of 2011, in the aftermath of the global financial crisis. At 1.1 per cent, the region’s 2014 growth rate represented a virtual standstill in per capita GDP. Falling prices for the region’s principal export commodities worsened the terms of trade and kept the account deficit at 2.7 per cent of regional GDP, despite the contraction of imports. Imports showed a differentiated pattern by subregion. In most South American countries, the sharp slowdown in domestic demand led to heavy falls in import volumes (-4.1 per cent). By contrast, import volumes continued to climb in Colombia, Mexico and most of the Central American countries. The overall result was that import values for Latin America as a whole contracted for the first time since 2009, by 1.0 per cent.

The cooling of economic growth at the regional level impacted the labour demand and translated into a weak wage employment creation in many countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Panama, Paraguay and Peru. The fiscal accounts of Latin America and the Caribbean showed the fiscal balance deteriorating slightly, on average, during the year. The region posted a fiscal deficit since 2009, but that did not push up public debt, which held steady at about 32 per cent of GDP. On the monetary and exchange-rate front, countries in the region adopted a mainly countercyclical approach in 2014, regardless of policy regime. More emphasis was placed on stimulating aggregate demand and setting and monitoring medium-term inflation targets. At the same time, authorities sought to mitigate the effects of external volatility on the region’s financial markets by using international reserves and making changes to macroprudential regulations.


Activities

A later eCLAC report on the Commission’s work [LC/G.2664(SES.36/7)] addressed activities undertaken and progress made under its 14 subprogrammes: linkages with the global economy, integration and regional cooperation; production and innovation; macroeconomic policies and growth; financing for development; social development and equality; mainstreaming the gender perspective in regional development; population and development; sustainable development and human settlements; natural resources and infrastructure; planning of public administration; statistics; subregional activities in Central America, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico; subregional activities in the Caribbean; and support for regional and subregional integration and cooperation processes and organizations.

Global economy, integration and regional cooperation

The eCLAC Division of International Trade and Integration focused on trade relations between Latin America and the Caribbean and the rest of the world, particularly Asia-Pacific, Europe and the United States, and intraregional trade. Other topics included global trade negotiations, regional and global supply chains, regional integration, trade facilitation, dispute settlements, international cooperation, the role of small- and medium-sized enterprises in trade, the intersection between trade and climate change and the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building activities.

The 2014 edition of the flagship publication Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Economy [E.14. II.G.5] examined the key features of the international context and their repercussions for world and regional trade; Latin American and Caribbean participation in global value chains; the contribution of regional integration to production integration; and intraregional and extraregional trade relations of the countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

The Division continued to contribute to improving the capacity of Latin American and Caribbean countries to participate effectively in global and
regional trade flows and value chains through various activities, including technical assistance, research and capacity-building activities. As part of those efforts, the subprogramme on linkages with the global economy, integration and regional cooperation successfully managed a series of Development Account projects: the project entitled “Towards productivity convergence: trade, financing, and technology for small-scale enterprises”, which was implemented in Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Peru; the further implementation of the 2012 project entitled “Facilitating the effective integration of developing countries in the global economy through Aid for Trade schemes”, within whose framework numerous events were held in 2014, including an interregional forum in Tunis, Tunisia, in April and a regional workshop in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, in September; and the project entitled “Strengthening the national capacities of export sectors in Latin America and the Caribbean to meet the challenges of climate change”, which helped countries to identify the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

Production and innovation

The eCLAC Division of Production, Productivity and Management continued to work on structural change and industrial policies in Latin America and the Caribbean by focusing its efforts on strengthening the capacity of governments to formulate policies and strategies to transform the production structure in the most innovative sectors. The Division published Foreign Direct Investment in Latin America and the Caribbean [Sales No. E.15.II.G.4], which analysed the causes and consequences of the 16 per cent decline in foreign direct investment that took place in 2014 in the light of slow regional and global growth. Further, as the technical secretariat of the Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Division received recognition from several countries for its work in areas such as infrastructure access, information and communications technology and health, information technology industries, open data and education, thus consolidating eCLAC role as a regional focal point in science, innovation and technology. In that regard, at the first session of the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies (Santiago, Chile, 9–10 June), established in 2012 [YUN 2012, p. 977], national representatives of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean discussed opportunities for regional cooperation on training and capacity-building in science, technology and innovation; the role of information and communications technologies for the development of science, technology and innovation; and the need for institution-building in that area. At that session, the Santiago Declaration was adopted. In 2014, the Division supported the development of the national digital policy of Uruguay through a comprehensive set of measures and activities, which resulted in the Digital Agenda Uruguay 2011–2015. Other events organized under the subprogramme included seminars and summer schools.

Macroeconomic policies and growth

The Economic Development Division of eCLAC published its flagship Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean [Sales No. E.15.II.G.3], which analyzed, among others, the region’s economic performance in 2014, and contained the notes relating to the economic performance of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean during the year. The Division also produced the 2014 Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean [Sales No. E.15.II.G.2], which focused on the economic activities of the region, domestic prices, employment and wages, the external sector and macroeconomic policies, while providing an overview of the international context and an outlook for the following year.

The Division held the twenty-sixth regional seminar on fiscal policy in Santiago, Chile, in January and a workshop on investment, volatility and growth in November, which examined policy options for reactivating investment in the region. The countries of the region were also active in enacting labour market reforms, incorporating components championed by eCLAC. In particular, the Division—through its flagship reports and its longstanding collaboration with ILO—advocated that countries in the region adopt policies to increase the formalization of the labour force and to extend greater protection to workers. In 2014, Argentina and Chile adopted policy measures in line with the eCLAC recommendations. Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile also enacted measures in line with the eCLAC recommendations in the area of tax progressivity and the taxation of wealth and capital income. Further, the Division implemented several extrabudgetary projects related to fiscal and labour market policies and managed a Development Account project on the same topic.

Financing for development

One of the aims under the financing for development subprogramme was to improve the capacity of Latin American and Caribbean policymakers to formulate and implement financial policies on generating and allocating domestic resources and mobilizing foreign resources for development. To that end, four workshops were organized during the year. The Economic Development Division continued to participate in the discussions on how to improve the financial architecture at the global and regional levels, and to provide
support to ECLAC and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in the areas of countercyclical balance-of-payments liquidity and financial integration. All 33 Member States of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) reaffirmed the importance of regional financial cooperation and integration in the final declaration—the Havana Declaration—of the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (Havana, Cuba, 28–29 January), and considered it essential for the stability and predictability of the international financial architecture to ensure that agreements reached between debtors and creditors within the context of sovereign debt restructuring processes were respected. The Division provided technical assistance to the UNASUR Working Group on Financial Integration on the financing of infrastructure. It also organized a regional meeting of the Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Finance at ECLAC headquarters (Santiago, 14 January), which discussed, from a regional perspective, financing for sustainable development in the context of the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals, and was followed by another meeting in March (Santiago, 14-15 May). A technical workshop on financial cooperation and regional integration was also organized by the Division in June, in conjunction with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The Division also undertook new research in various areas to support the ECLAC position on topics related to financing for development.

Social development and equality

In 2014, the Social Development Division worked towards achieving social development and equality through approaches based on human rights, while its long-term policies stressed the need to expand contributory and non-contributory social protection and investment, to improve sectoral policies on health and education and to improve labour market conditions and institutions. A milestone for the region was represented by the adoption by ECLAC of resolution 682(XXXV), by which the Commission established the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and decided to convene the Conference’s first session in the second half of 2015.

The Division published the 2014 edition of Social Panorama of Latin America (Sales number: E.15.II.G.6), which presented measurements taken by ECLAC for the analysis of poverty and income distribution. Such measurements confirmed that structural poverty—deprivation reinforced by administrative, economic and social barriers preventing access to new skills, employment opportunities, improved health care and better housing—was still a feature of Latin American society, despite progress over the past decade. To contribute to a more comprehensive design of public policies aimed at overcoming poverty and socioeconomic inequality, the 2014 edition examined trends in social spending and set out a deeper gap analysis focused on three areas: youth and development, gender inequality in the labour market and urban residential segregation. Other initiatives in 2014, included a joint study by ECLAC and the Ibero-American Youth Organization, which concluded that public spending on youth was 50 per cent lower than on other social groups and emphasized the importance of investment in youth as a driver of development; and a collaboration between ECLAC and UNICEF, which led to the English version of the Guide to Estimating Child Poverty.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 17 November [meeting 5]: the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of ECLAC [E/2014/15/Add.1/Rev.1], adopted resolution 2014/32 without vote [agenda item 13].

Establishment of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting the adoption on 9 May 2014 by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at its thirty-fifth session, held in Lima from 5 to 9 May 2014, of resolution 682(XXXV), entitled “Establishment of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean”,

Endorses the establishment of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, as set out in Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean resolution 682(XXXV) and the annex thereto, which are annexed to the present resolution.

ANNEX

Resolution 682(XXXV)

Establishment of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

Recalling the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995, and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, entitled “World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world”, held in Geneva from 26 June to 1 July 2000,

Reaffirming that the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and other relevant internationally agreed instruments constitute, together with the global dialogue on this issue, the basic framework for the promotion of social development for all at the national and international levels,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the development goals contained therein, as well as the commitments made at the 2005 World Summit and at the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, and the outcome docu-
ment of the 2013 special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Bearing in mind that the year 2015 marks the twentieth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development,

Considering that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has been cooperating systematically in the field of social development to facilitate inter-agency coordination among the countries of the region, international organizations and the national agencies charged with carrying out projects to promote social development,

Considering also the key role played by the Commission in the region in recent years in facilitating and encouraging dialogue among representatives of the countries of the region, and thus in promoting the consolidation of institutions devoted to social development and to policies and regulatory frameworks for such activities,

Recognizing the support function performed by the United Nations regional commissions in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development,

Taking into account the need to promote cooperation in the sphere of social development,

Having reviewed the proposal for the establishment of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the proposed nature and the objectives of the Conference, as set forth in the annex to the present resolution,

1. Approves the establishment of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the objectives of which are set forth in the annex to the present resolution, as one of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, bearing in mind the observations and suggestions included in the report of the Commission on its thirty-fifth session, with a view to eradicating poverty in the region and promoting decent work, equality and social inclusion;

2. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Commission to submit such proposals as may be necessary for the establishment of the Conference to the relevant United Nations bodies for their consideration;

3. Decides to convene the first meeting of the Conference during the second half of 2015;

4. Takes note of the fact that the seventh meeting of the Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean will be held in Mexico on 30 and 31 October 2014 and will be a discussion platform for promoting inclusive social development in the region;

5. Welcomes the generous offer of the Government of Peru to host the first meeting of the Conference;

6. Invites the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to join this initiative;

7. Requests the Executive Secretary to report on the implementation of the present resolution at the thirty-sixth session of the Commission.

Annex to resolution 682(XXXV)

I. Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Nature

1. The Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean shall be a subsidiary body of the Commission that will contribute to the progress of social development policies and activities in the countries of the region.

Objectives

2. The objectives of the Conference shall be:

   (a) To promote the improvement of national policies on social development, bearing in mind national requirements and recommendations made by specialized agencies and other relevant organizations;

   (b) To further international, regional and bilateral cooperation among national offices and institutions and international and regional agencies to facilitate technology and knowledge transfer and joint activities in the field of social development;

   (c) To contribute from the perspective of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to the discussions and proposals considered by the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Membership

3. The States members of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean will be members of the Conference.

Meetings of the Conference

4. The Conference shall hold its regular meetings every two years. The Conference may accept an invitation from the Government of a member State to hold its regular meeting in that country.

Presiding Officers

5. The Conference shall elect Presiding Officers in accordance with the regulations established by the Commission. The Chair of the Presiding Officers shall also preside over the meetings of the Conference.

Secretariat

6. The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean shall serve as the secretariat for the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The secretariat shall make available to the Conference such documents as have been approved by the Commission and the facilities necessary to carry out its work.

II. Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

Nature

7. The Conference shall appoint Presiding Officers to support it, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 5 above.
Composition
8. The Presiding Officers shall be composed of a Chair and six members. The members shall be elected from among the member countries of the Conference. Special attention shall be devoted to ensuring that the subregional groupings of countries are duly represented among the Presiding Officers.

Election of the Presiding Officers and duration of mandates
9. At the beginning of each meeting of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Chair of the Presiding Officers, in consultation with the Presiding Officers and the Conference, shall draw up a proposal for the election of the next Presiding Officers.
10. The newly elected Presiding Officers shall take up their duties upon the conclusion of the regular meeting of the Conference at which they were elected, and shall remain in office until the conclusion of the next regular meeting.
11. The Presiding Officers, including the Chair, shall be elected by the Conference at its regular meeting for a term of two years.
12. The members of the Presiding Officers may serve for three successive terms. The Chair may not be re-elected to that office for a second consecutive term, but may be elected to serve as one of the Presiding Officers.
13. A Presiding Officer who has served for three successive terms may not be re-elected until two years have elapsed since the end of his or her previous mandate.

Duties
14. The Presiding Officers shall have the following duties:
   (a) To carry out the tasks assigned to them by the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;
   (b) To follow up on the implementation of the agreements adopted and the tasks assigned by the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;
   (c) To decide on the documentation required for its meetings.

Meetings
15. The Presiding Officers shall meet at least once during the interval between regular meetings of the Conference. At the meeting preceding the next meeting of the Conference, the Presiding Officers shall adopt a programme of activities for the Conference, which shall be submitted to the Conference at its regular meeting.
16. The Presiding Officers may invite to their meetings any countries or experts they consider may make a contribution to the fulfilment of their duties.

Mainstreaming the gender in regional development
The Division for Gender Affairs continued to support the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in the institutional documents and work priorities of ECLAC and contributed to the preparation of the position document for the thirty-fifth session of the Commission (see p. 000), which marked a turning point for the institution by deepening the gender perspective, highlighting the concept of autonomy, emphasizing the employment situation of women and proposing compacts. Further, the Division, through the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and its Presiding Officers, and the ECLAC Statistical Conference of the Americas, continued to work with the national authorities responsible for women’s and gender affairs and national statistical offices. The Division organized the fiftieth meeting (Santiago, 19–20 May) and the fifty-first meeting (Santiago, 17–19 November) of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also continued its capacity-building activities for gender equality and better governance within the framework of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean and, in that context, published the Annual Report 2013–2014: Confronting violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean [LC/G.2626 & Rev.1]. The report followed up on a previous commitment by the Observatory to analyse violence against women and focused on the situation across the region, progress in meeting international recommendations, national public policies, and constraints and challenges.

Advances in mainstreaming a gender perspective were also achieved through interdivisional collaboration with other ECLAC subprogrammes, country offices and subregional headquarters, building on collaborative efforts in the areas of population and development, planning of public administration, and statistics. Other initiatives included Development Account projects such as the one titled Strengthening national capacities to design and implement rights-based policies and programmes that address care of dependent populations and women’s economic empowerment in urban areas, and a collaboration with UNICEF, which resulted in the implementation of a project aimed at studying the situation of the girl child in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Population and development
The Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC continued to promote population issues and secure their inclusion in the development policies and programmes of Latin American and Caribbean countries, notably through the implementation of the 2013 Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development [YUN 2013, p. 730]. The Montevideo Consensus was the outcome of the first session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Uruguay in August 2013, and represented a regional milestone in the follow-up to the Programme of Action...
Sustainable development and human settlements

The activities of the sustainable development and human settlements subprogramme focused on the interrelationships between economic growth, environmental protection, urban development and social equity, and were implemented by the Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division.

The Division provided technical support on climate change adaptation, urban development, sectoral impacts of climate change, environmental taxation and the strengthening of technical and institutional capacities. The meetings of the Chief Negotiators on Climate Change in Latin America and the Caribbean provided an opportunity to strengthen capacities and prepare for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21), to be held in 2015.

Significant progress was made on the regional process related to Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development [YUN 2012, p. 809] and on access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Santiago Decision, adopted at the fourth meeting of the focal points appointed by the Governments of the signatory countries of the Declaration on the application of Principle 10, held at CLAC headquarters in November, represented a milestone and led to the initiation of negotiations on a regional agreement. The Presiding Officers were requested to steer the process, with the support of CLAC as technical secretariat, with a view to concluding negotiations on a regional instrument by December 2016.

The Division supported the development of national and regional environmental data to promote access to information, encourage public participation in environmental policymaking and, when required, facilitate access to justice in environmental matters. The Division also focused on analysing the impacts of climate change on the coasts of the Latin America and Caribbean region. During the year, the Division worked in close collaboration with the Statistics Division (subprogramme 11) and some national authorities to produce a document on public environmental information, including guidelines for decision makers to account environmental expenditures, entitled El gasto en protección ambiental en América Latina y el Caribe: Bases conceptuales y experiencia regional.

In addition, a regional workshop on pollutant release and transfer registers, held in October, helped the countries to build key information on pollution as the core resource for environmental policy implementation. Workshops were also organized at the subnational level in Peru, Mexico and Brazil.

Natural resources and infrastructure

The Natural Resources and Infrastructure Division examined global issues related to sustainable energy, governance of natural resources, infrastructure gaps and the challenge of integrated and sustainable policies for logistics and mobility. Concepts as smart grids, sustainable cities and intelligent transport systems posed challenges related to industrial and technological restructuring, with a focus on increasing use of renewable energy and implementing sound energy efficiency programmes and projects. To that end, the subprogramme generated new methodology-
cal proposals and regional initiatives, such as the high-level energy efficiency policy dialogues and the Energy Efficiency Indicators Database, which gathered data for 20 countries of the region.

Several studies, workshops and conferences on the governance of natural resources were undertaken to discuss a new vision to capture revenues from natural resources and to use those rents to bring about a structural change. Further, the Division organized several events relating to trade and sustainable development, which included the sixth international seminar on carbon footprint (Santiago, 11–12 June). While the main target group of the eCLAC activities remained public policymakers from all levels of the executive, legislative and judicial branches, the Commission also worked increasingly with civil society, universities, NGOs, the private sector and international, regional and bilateral organizations.

The Commission’s technical assistance to promote integrated and sustainable logistics and mobility policies had a major impact at the legislative level. National capacity-building workshops were carried out in Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Further, the technical assistance provided to the Haitian National Commission for the Modernization of Public Transportation enabled government and private sector representatives to consider the linkages between transport and sustainable development and to launch a national dialogue on a sustainable logistics and mobility policy.

During the year, eCLAC, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Development Bank of Latin America signed a memorandum of understanding (Santiago, 11–12 June). While the main target group of the eCLAC activities remained public policymakers from all levels of the executive, legislative and judicial branches, the Commission also worked increasingly with civil society, universities, NGOs, the private sector and international, regional and bilateral organizations.

The activities of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES)—eCLAC’s public administration division—were shaped around coordination between levels of government, monitoring and evaluating public programmes, open government practices, and foresight studies and building visions for the future. In addition, the Institute’s Regional Council for Planning continued to consolidate its role as a regional political forum for national planning authorities to discuss and exchange planning practices.

During the year, ILPES assisted the countries of the region in public and fiscal policies by providing support for the formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes and policies, and by developing advisory activities and training. To that end, ILPES organized meetings of its Regional Council for Planning and of its Presiding Officers and international meetings of experts; issued publications on public management and territorial development in the region and other studies on specific topics; held training courses and workshops; provided technical cooperation and advisory services; and updated manuals and databases.

E-government and open government issues were incorporated into the ILPES programme of work in order to apply the potential of Information and communications technology (ICT) in public administration. Most countries in the region promoted and developed e-government initiatives aimed at making public services more efficient and increasing levels of transparency and citizen participation in public affairs.

ILPES carried out training and advisory activities in the region on foresight studies, future scenarios and building up long-term development visions. In that context, the Institute organized a seminar entitled “Latin America and the Caribbean in 2030: world visions, continental views”, which was held in Santiago in September, and was attended by some 240 participants from 10 countries, including international experts from Latin America and the Caribbean, the United States, Europe and Asia. During the year, the second symposium on economic and social planning was held, following a model that had been launched in 2013. At the symposium, 29 papers were presented on the theme of foresight and long-term planning, eight of which were selected and published as an e-book. Also in 2014, the Institute issued the latest edition of the Panorama de la Gestión Pública, which highlighted the interconnectedness of public finances, public administration and planning challenges. Furthermore, during the year, ILPES launched an electronic repository to store and analyse development plans from the region, which made available, through a single digital portal, a comprehensive set of national, subnational and sectoral development plans, programmes and agendas, including a summary of the characteristics of each plan and its main strategic objectives.

Statistics

The Statistics Division’s flagship publication, the Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2014, presented a set of basic statistics on the economic, sociodemographic and environmental situation of the region as part of the CEPALSTAT—the eCLAC statistical databases and publications portal. At the thirteenth meeting of the Executive Committee of the eCLAC Statistical Conference of the Americas (Santiago, 12–14 August), the Committee reviewed, inter alia, the status of implementation of the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities 2014–2015, adopted by the Statistical Conference of
the Americas at its seventh meeting [YUN 2013, p. 976], and the agreements adopted at the twelfth meeting of the Executive Committee, both held in 2013.

The Division also worked to increase the Latin American and Caribbean countries’ capacity to monitor economic, social and environmental trends and formulate evidence-based policies. Many activities were undertaken by countries, including Uruguay, Ecuador, Panama and Honduras, in compliance with the ECLAC recommendations. Countries also received assistance in monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and with the regional mechanism for defining indicators for the sustainable development goals. A seminar was held in August on the System of National Accounts 2008 (SNA 2008) to continue helping countries of the region with their implementation of the system. It was attended by professionals from national statistical offices and central banks directly involved in the production of national accounts.

**Subregional activities**

**Central America, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico**

In 2014, the subregional headquarters in Mexico—which served the needs of the Central American subregion, together with Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico—continued to focus its efforts on economic and social development, energy, international trade and integration, agricultural development and climate change. Technical assistance on fiscal and monetary policies, national planning systems, and integration was provided to Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua.

International trade and integration remained an important focus area for the subregional headquarters in Mexico. Several meetings were organized during the year, including an experts’ meeting in Guatemala in July on a strategy for trade and investments between Guatemala and China. A meeting of experts on coffee and climate change was held in Panama in October to discuss and analyse potential impacts and lines of action to address and mitigate risks. Also in October, the first meeting of the Regional Technical Group of the Joint ECLAC/International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) project on information management for public policies and projects of rural and agricultural development and food security in Central America took place in San José, Costa Rica.

A new framework agreement was established with the Central American Agricultural Council, which involved an initiative to alert decision makers to the risks of climate change and to support ministers of the environment of Central America, who, in their response to the challenge, would need to generate and disseminate solid evidence on vulnerabilities, impacts and policy options and to bring on board key sectors and fiscal authorities. The initiative included the seven Central American countries and the Dominican Republic.

The ECLAC subregional headquarters provided technical assistance to the countries it served, as well as to other stakeholders, to formulate several pieces of legislation. It also organized various workshops on the design and implementation of youth policies to promote the social inclusion of youth. Costa Rica, for example, was provided with technical assistance in the formulation of the Public Policy on Youth 2014–2019.

Among the publications issued during the year with the key contribution of the ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico were *Energy Efficiency in Central America: Progress and action towards the fulfillment of the goals of the Central American sustainable energy strategy*, in January; *Strengthening Value Chains as an Industrial Policy Instrument: Methodology and Experience of ECLAC in Central America*, in July; and *Structural Change and Growth in Central America and the Dominican Republic: An Overview of Two Decades, 1990–2011*, in November.

**Caribbean**

On 24 April, the International Year of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was launched in Kingston, Jamaica, with an event highlighting the vulnerabilities of those countries. Several Caribbean-wide activities were organized to engage the countries of the subregion and raise awareness, including a poster competition for primary and secondary schools, and an essay competition for secondary- and tertiary-level students.

The ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean—based in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago—facilitated regional dialogue, cooperation, and collaboration to address, among others, development issues of the subregion. At the third Caribbean Development Roundtable (Kingston, 23–24 April), development experts examined new approaches to the sustainable development of SIDS in the Caribbean, which resulted in thirty-seven conclusions and recommendations. Further, the twenty-fifth session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (Kingston, 25 April) was convened at the ministerial level to address key Caribbean priorities ahead of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States and the integration of those priorities into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In 2014, ECLAC finalized a study assessing the progress made in implementing the Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIForum)-European Union Economic Partnership Agreement—which had come into force at the end of 2008—and its impact on trade and economic development in the...
Caribbean, with special attention to the costs and consequences of implementation, and areas for adjustment. The findings of that study contributed to the first comprehensive five-year review of the Agreement.

Several meetings were convened during the year, including the sixth meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee for the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Port of Spain, 15 April), which reviewed the progress made by Caribbean countries in implementing the Strategy; and the Caribbean Technical Meeting on the Beijing+20 Review and Appraisal of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Santiago, 14–15 November), at which a Caribbean Statement outlining the ongoing challenges facing the subregion with respect to gender and development was adopted; and an expert group meeting on demand model for maritime passenger transportation in the Caribbean. Eclac also made contributions to the subregion’s understanding of the application of information and communication technology (ict) to development. In that regard, a study was commissioned, and an expert meeting convened on the possible impact of digital currency, such as Bitcoin, and mobile money in the Caribbean.

Support for regional and subregional integration

The Office of the Secretary of the Commission provided technical and substantive inputs to regional and subregional integration organizations in support of discussions and consensus-building on social, economic and sustainable development issues and facilitated dialogue between the Latin American and Caribbean region and extraregional actors, such as Europe, China and the Republic of Korea. The Office responded to external requests; coordinated the collection and systematization of information, studies and technical reports; made arrangements for technical assistance missions; and generated guidelines for the formulation and implementation of plans and strategies.

Substantive contributions were provided to the second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (Havana, Cuba, 28–29 January) in the shape of five documents on public policies for equality, literacy, financial architecture and governance of natural resources and on the socioeconomic outlook for the region. Of those studies, the Economic and Social Panorama of the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States, 2014, was published during the year, based on excerpts from some of the annual flags published by the Commission in 2014, including the Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2014;Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Economy, 2014; and Social Panorama of Latin America, 2014. Also, in 2014, as a follow-up to the earlier reports published in 2009 and 2011, Unasur: Fostering South American integration through development and cooperation was published providing an overview of some key issues on the development agenda of the nations of South America.

Programme and organizational questions

At its thirty-fifth session, eclac decided to grant associate membership in the Commission to Sint Maarten [E/2014/40 (res. 689(XXXV)], and approved its calendar of conferences for the period 2015–2016 [res. 676(XXXV)].

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 17 November [meeting 51], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of eclac [E/2014/15/Add.1/Rev.1], adopted resolution 2014/33 without vote [agenda item 13].

Admission of Sint Maarten as an associate member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

The Economic and Social Council,
Taking note of Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean resolution 683(XXXV) of 9 May 2014, in which the Commission welcomed the request made by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Santiago on behalf of the Government of Sint Maarten that the latter be granted associate membership in the Commission and decided that Sint Maarten should be granted associate membership in the Commission,
1. Approves the granting to Sint Maarten of associate membership in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;
2. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Commission to take the measures necessary for the implementation of the present resolution.

Venue of ECLAC thirty-sixth session

The Commission [E/2014/40 (res. 689(XXXV))] recommended that the Economic and Social Council approve the holding of the Commission’s thirty-sixth session in Mexico in the first semester of 2016.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 17 November [meeting 51], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of eclac [E/2014/15/Add.1/Rev.1], adopted resolution 2014/34 without vote [agenda item 13].

Venue of the thirty-sixth 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 of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the
Caribbean, as well as rules 1 and 2 of the rules of procedure of the Commission.

Considering the invitation of the Government of Mexico to host the thirty-sixth session of the Commission,

1. Takes note of Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean resolution 689(XXXV) of 9 May 2014, by which the Commission accepted with pleasure the invitation of the Government of Mexico to host the thirty-sixth session of the Commission;

2. Endorses the decision of the Commission to hold its thirty-sixth session in Mexico in the first half of 2016.

Western Asia

The Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), at its twenty-eighth session (Tunis, Tunisia, 8–15 September) [E/2014/41], held eight plenary meetings and four closed meetings. The theme of the session was social justice in the policies of Arab States [E/ESCWA/28/8] and the plenary meetings were held in two segments, one for senior officials and the other for ministers. At the senior officials’ segment, consideration was given to requests by UN Member States and/or its specialized agencies that were not members of ESCWA to participate as observers in the session [E/ESCWA/28/3]. The segment also reviewed the economic and social developments in the Arab region 2013–2014 [E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/1/Summary]; the outcomes of the Arab High-level Forum on Sustainable Development (Amman, Jordan, 2–4 April) [E/ESCWA/SDPD/2014/WG.1/6/Report]; support for the Palestinian people and the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People [E/ESCWA/28/4]; the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016–2017 [E/ESCWA/28/5]; the report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission [E/ESCWA/28/6 & Part I–Part VI]; and management issues [E/ESCWA/28/7 & Part I–Part VI]. The ministerial dialogues covered social justice and a new development approach [E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.I]; economic policies supportive of social justice [E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.2]; intergenerational justice and access to natural resources [E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.3]; and monitoring and measuring social justice [E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.4]. The session concluded with the adoption of the Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region and recommendations made by the senior officials’ segment.

The Commission adopted eight resolutions to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council for its action or attention on the following issues: the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development [res. 314(XXVIII)]; establishing an intergovernmental committee on technology for development [res. 315(XXVIII)]; support for the Palestinian people [res. 316(XXVIII)]; adoption of the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016–2017 [res. 317(XXVIII)]; adoption of session reports of the ESCWA subsidiary bodies [res. 318(XX-VIII)]; adoption of the proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2014–2015 [res. 319(XXVIII)]; redesignating the Technical Committee as the Executive Committee and amending its terms of reference [res. 320(XXVIII)]; and redesignating ESCWA as the Economic and Social Commission for Arab States [res. 321(XXVIII)].

Economic trends

The “Summary of the survey of economic and social developments in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region, 2014–2015” [E/2015/20] stated that the average growth rate of gross domestic product (GDP) of the Arab region in real terms was estimated to be 1.5 per cent in 2014, barely changed from 2013. Negative growth estimates for Iraq, Libya and Syria, attributed to intensifying armed conflicts, contributed to the deceleration. In addition to conflicts and related security disruptions in the region, a significant fall in oil prices and the attending uncertain prospects became another predominant economic concern. From its peak in June 2014, oil prices plunged by more than 50 per cent in the second half of the year. However, Member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) with their expansion of the non-oil sector continued to lead the growth of the Arab region.


Activities

ESCWA activities in its 2014–2015 work programme [E/ESCWA/29/4(Part I)] were organized under its seven subprogrammes: integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development; social development; economic development and integration; information and communication technology for regional integration; statistics for evidence-based policymaking; advancement of women; and conflict mitigation and development.

Construction of office facilities

Report of Secretary-General. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/249 [YUN 2011, p. 1398], the Secretary-General, in a February report [A/68/748], proposed mitigation measures to strengthen the safety and security of staff at ESCWA in Beirut. In late 2013, he initiated a comprehensive blast assessment to be conducted of the United Nations House in Beirut. To that end, a specialist firm was commissioned to perform the blast assessment and the results of that specialist assessment were received on 17 January 2014. The report set out the resource requirements
securing the building for the biennium 2014–2015 and requested the General Assembly to approve the establishment of two temporary positions (1 P-4 and 1 Local level) and appropriate an additional non-recurrent amount of $7,306,900 under the programme budget for the biennium 2014–2015. The Secretary-General also requested the Assembly to note that the non-recurrent amount of $7,306,900 would represent a charge against the contingency fund for the biennium 2014–2015.

**ACABQ Report.** In March [A/68/808], the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) recommended that the General Assembly establish one temporary position at the P-4 level under the programme budget for the biennium 2014–2015; however, the Committee recommended against the proposed establishment of one temporary Local level position and a corresponding adjustment to the related operational requirements. The Committee also recommended that the Assembly appropriate an additional non-recurrent amount of $5,722,400 under the programme budget for the biennium 2014–2015 comprising increases under section 22 ($281,800) and section 33, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance ($5,440,600).

By resolution 68/247 B (section VI) of 9 April (see p. 000), the General Assembly endorsed ACABQ’s conclusions and recommendations.

**Integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development**

In 2014, **escwa** continued to work with Arab countries to achieve integrated and sustainable management of their natural resources through strengthened regional cooperation and policy coordination. In an effort to aid rural communities, the Commission prepared during the year field surveys in four pilot countries (Jordan, Morocco, Oman, the Sudan) and linked locally sourced renewable energy technologies to production processes that enhanced productivity and increased income. Escwa prepared technical material to map electricity management structures in Arab countries and ran projects to develop relevant skills in the public and private sectors with the goal of helping authorities to introduce reforms that enhanced financing of energy efficiency projects. Escwa also responded to a request from Yemen to train officials in the use of solar energy in agricultural water pumps and in finance mechanisms for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. Further, following the establishment of green help desks in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman and Tunisia, escwa conducted workshops on the help desks and green production, and a study tour for help desk coordinators and the directors of Cleaner Production Centres in the Arab region. A seminar on urban water management was held in Oman in February to foster the integrated management of water resources. In October, the Arab Integrated Water Resources Management Network, in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme (undp) Cap-Net and the Water Footprint Network, held a training course in Oman for water and environment professionals.

On 18 September [E/2014/41 (res. 314(XXVIII)), the Commission invited Member States to widely participate in the session of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and requested escwa to hold sessions of the Forum periodically. It further requested escwa to monitor progress in achieving sustainable development in the Arab region, and the escwa Executive Secretary to present a report on actions undertaken in that respect at the twenty-ninth session of the Commission.

**Social development**

During the year, as part of its regular efforts to help Member States to pursue inclusive social development, escwa undertook field projects, seminars, meetings and e-forums on youth empowerment, population and development, social justice and democratic governance. The Commission provided Member States with technical assistance on a rights-based approach to policy and encouraged the mainstreaming of social justice in national reform plans. Throughout the year, the Commission conducted consultations on social policy reform aimed at a fairer redistribution of wealth, greater public involvement in policymaking and maximizing the benefits of population dynamics in the context of the youth bulge, large-scale displacement and labour migration.

The fifteenth Meeting of the Heads of National Population Councils in the Arab Region, co-organized by escwa, the League of Arab States and the United Nations Population Fund, focused on four priority areas: the impact on development of forced migration resulting from conflicts and occupation; youth empowerment; equality and empowerment of women; and reproductive and sexual health. At a follow-up meeting, held by the Commission in November, a framework reference was proposed for priority population programmes implementing the 2013 Cairo Declaration on Development Challenges and Population Dynamics in a Changing Arab World.

In the course of the year, escwa convened a series of national workshops in Egypt, Palestine and the Sudan on policymaking, strategic planning and evaluation, and programme cycle management. It also provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Social Development in Oman to develop the country’s 10-year Social Work Strategy for the period 2016–2025. Approximately 136 officials benefited from those initiatives. Furthermore, the Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region, adopted at the twenty-eighth session of the Commission, represented...
a contract between ESCWA and its Member States to promote social justice through the development of policies based on rights, equality and equity, and the elimination of all forms of social injustice and discrimination in Arab countries through legislative and constitutional reforms.

**Economic development and integration**

In 2014, the subprogramme’s areas of work, led by the Economic Development and Integration Division, were regional integration; globalization and financing for development; economic analysis; and development policy. In particular, ESCWA focused its work programme and interventions on deepening regional integration in three main areas: infrastructure and transport logistics; trade policies; and macroeconomic convergence and finance. The Commission also continued to follow-up on the implementation of outcomes of the Monterrey Consensus [YUN 2002, p. 953] and the Doha Conference on Financing for Development [YUN 2008, p. 1069] in the Arab region. It assisted Member States in mobilizing international resources, increasing financial and technical cooperation for development and organizing nine workshops on investment dispute settlement and double taxation avoidance, at which officials from Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, the Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen participated.

Further, the Commission helped Member States to update their national development strategies through analytical outputs in macroeconomic policies, and through support in the design and implementation of policies and strategies for sustainable economic growth, employment creation and poverty alleviation. During the year, research was initiated exploring the links between transport and infrastructure efficiency on the one hand, and economic growth on the other.

**ICT for regional integration**

In 2014, the subprogramme facilitated regional discussions on challenges and opportunities in the field of ICT. Global trends and good practices in e-government service integration were reviewed in a study titled “Integration of Service Delivery in the Arab Region: Role of Standards and Interoperability”. Further, the Commission continued the implementation of the Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders in the ESCWA region, by organizing four core training modules to build capacity of government officials in harnessing ICT for development. ESCWA continued its work on expanding the digital Arabic content (DAC) in Egypt, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates, where capacity-building workshops and awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of the DAC industry were held. Those events also featured the launch of national DAC competitions on the best project ideas. The Commission organized a thematic workshop on digital content for an inclusive knowledge society to explore various aspects of digital content and multilingualism and share good practices. A leaflet titled “Digital Arabic content: promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in the Arab region” was also published.

The Commission formulated a procedural framework for combating cybercrime and enhancing cybersafety in the region based on a study on the topic issued during the year. A capacity-building workshop on cybersafety was also organized (Muscat, Oman, 8–9 December).

On regional integration, the Commission prepared research papers to examine the impact of the establishment of a customs union in the Arab region. Those papers studied non-tariff measures, implementation scenarios and institutional frameworks for the creation of a customs union. They also underlined the importance of complete implementation of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area measures.

On 18 September [E/2014/41 (res. 315(XXVIII))] the Commission endorsed changing the name of subprogramme 4, from “Information and communications technology for regional integration” to “Technology for development and regional integration”; decided to establish an intergovernmental committee to be named “Committee on Technology for Development”, comprising representatives from ESCWA Member States with experience in the field, and which would replace the Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation; and also decided that the Committee should hold its sessions once every two years, with effect from 2016.

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION**

On 17 November [meeting 51], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of ESCWA [E/2014/15/Add.2], adopted resolution 2014/35 without vote [agenda item 13].

**Establishment of an intergovernmental committee on technology for development in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**

**The Economic and Social Council**

Noting the adoption on 18 September 2014 by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia at its twenty-eighth session of resolution 315(XXVIII),

Endorses the establishment of an intergovernmental committee on technology for development in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, as set out in Commission resolution 315(XXVIII), the text of which is annexed to the present resolution.

**ANNEX**

**Resolution 315(XXVIII)**

**Establishment of an intergovernmental committee on technology for development**

**The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**, Referring to the 2005 World Summit Outcome, in which the States Members of the United Nations recog-
nized that science and technology, including information and communications technology, are vital for the achievement of the development goals, and to Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/68 of 5 November 2004 on science and technology for development.

Referring also to the outcome of the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005, in particular the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society and the international mechanisms and forums it generated,

Referring further to goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals, which includes a target on making available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technology,

Recognizing the importance of increasing the participation of the Governments of States members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in identifying priorities and planning and improving the Commission’s programme of work in the field of technology for development,

Recognizing also the need to enhance coordination and integration between the Commission and Arab regional organizations regarding technology-for-development policies and programmes, to meet the needs of member States and develop such technology to achieve inclusive development in the Arab region,

Taking into consideration the recommendations resulting from the evaluation undertaken by the Commission of its working mechanisms, including a proposal to establish a committee on technology for development,

Stressing the important role of the Commission in promoting information and communications technology sectors and related industries and enhancing their role in development, the information society and the digital economy in member States and linking them to the international process of the World Summit on the Information Society and the mechanisms and international forums it generated for Internet governance; and invigorating the role of member States at the international level in those international forums,

Stressing also the important role of the Commission’s Technology Centre in the fields of science and technology and in networking scientific and technological research with major economic sectors in member States,

Taking into consideration the efforts undertaken by the Commission under subprogramme 4, Information and communications technology for regional integration, of programme 19, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the biennial programme plan and its achievements in that field in advancing the information and communications technology sector and scientific and technological research,

Guided by the work of other United Nations regional commissions regarding the establishment of specialized committees on technology for development,

1. Endorses changing the name of subprogramme 4 of programme 19 of the biennial programme plan, from “Information and communications technology for regional integration” to “Technology for development and regional integration”;

2. Decides to establish an intergovernmental committee, to be named the Committee on Technology for Development, comprising representatives from States members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia with experience in the field, which would replace the Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation, use the resources allocated to it and undertake the following:

(a) Identifying priorities of the Commission’s programme of work and medium-term plans regarding technology for development, including scientific research and innovation, the digital economy and the information society, knowledge economies and emerging areas;

(b) Monitoring the progress achieved in the field of technology, including information and communications technology, Internet governance, the digital economy and the information society on the one hand, and areas related to scientific research and transfer of technology on the other hand; and formulating recommendations to strengthen the development of those fields;

(c) Following up regional and international processes, conferences and forums relevant to subprogramme 4, and coordinating regional efforts to implement decisions and recommendations of those conferences;

(d) Supporting the secretariat of the Commission in continuing to follow up the implementation of the Tunis Agenda on the Information Society adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society and participating in the activities and projects related to the World Summit beyond 2015;

(e) Advancing the work of the secretariat in supporting cooperation with the ministerial councils and the organizations and unions of the League of Arab States, including the Council of Arab Ministers of Communications and Information Technology, the Arab Administrative Development Organization and other specialized organizations, in harmonizing policies and strategies, supporting communication and partnerships and coordinating positions at the international level in addition to building capacities;

3. Also decides that the Committee shall hold its sessions once every two years, with effect from 2016;

4. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Commission to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution to the Commission at its twenty-ninth session.

Statistics

In the field of statistics, ESCWA worked closely with national statistics offices to formulate a strategy and identify priorities for the development of official statistics in the Arab region and the improvement of data quality, availability and dissemination. During the year, the Statistics Division was in the process of modernizing statistical systems at ESCWA and of creating a database to produce reliable, high-quality data accessible to all stakeholders. The achievement of this objective would help formulate evidence-based policies in Member States and promote statistical coordination at all levels.

One of the most important initiatives in terms of official statistics was the migration towards the System of National Accounts (SNA) 2008. Most ESCWA Member States had made progress in that regard, particularly in implementing the input-output tables and supply and use tables in line with the SNA 2008
methodology. The importance of official statistics in the context of the data revolution and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda was highlighted in Executive Committee meetings and at the twenty-eighth ESCWA ministerial session.

Advancement of women

In 2014, the Commission played a key role in the area of the advancement of women’s rights in the Arab region, leading a progress review on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 20 years later (Beijing+20), contributing to a High-level Ministerial Conference that adopted the Cairo Declaration on the Post-2015 Development Agenda for Women, and helping Member States to submit a record number of reports on the status of women. Legislative progress was made in several countries, with bolder commitments to gender equality and greater protection of women’s rights.

ESCWA organized a series of expert group meetings in cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the League of Arab States to develop a detailed regional synthesis report on the issue of the advancement of women in the region. The Commission also examined the ways in which the right of access of women and girls to justice was put into practice in the region, and, in that context, organized an expert group meeting on women’s access to justice (Beirut, Lebanon, 23–24 September). The Commission also examined the extent to which international human rights frameworks were implemented in the region.

ESCWA provided technical assistance to develop national women’s machineries in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, the Sudan and Tunisia. It also supported the League of Arab States in developing a strategic framework and action plan for the implementation of the Cairo Declaration on the Post-2015 Development Agenda for Women: Opportunities and Challenges, adopted on 23 February by the Arab countries’ Governments participating in the high-level meeting on “Millennium Development Goals for women and girls, Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in the Arab region”.

Conflict mitigation and development

Political upheaval, violence, instability and occupation continued to characterize the Arab region in 2014. The region spent almost 4.1 per cent of its GDP on weapons—more than twice the average for developing countries—making it the world’s biggest arms-buying region in relative terms. The Arab region also included three out of the five countries with the greatest outflow of refugees—Syria (almost 3 million), Somalia (1.12 million) and the Sudan (648,900); and two of its countries, Lebanon (more than 1 million) and Jordan (around 700,000), hosted the highest number of refugees around the world.

The conflict mitigation and development subprogramme, implemented by the Emerging and Conflict-related Issues Division, aimed at assessing the social and economic costs of conflict and instability in countries such as Mauritania, the Sudan and Yemen, which suffered from structural vulnerabilities and chronic poverty. Evidence-based reports on the impact of the occupation in Palestine were also issued to assist decision makers, including from the UN General Assembly.

Further, the Commission carried out research on the impact of conflict and instability on development. A report on measuring the impact of the “neighbourhood effect” in the Arab region, for example, studied the effect of conflict and other upheavals on neighbouring countries and how to reduce their impact and the likelihood of contagion.

ESCWA contributed to the Fourteenth Annual Arab Administrative Development Organization Conference on Cooperation in Establishing Resilience toward Global Risks in the Arab Region (Cairo, 17–19 December), with research on policy options to mitigate risks in the economy, the environment, public administration and governance, and in infrastructure and social matters.

In the context of the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Commission released a study on the social and economic situation of Palestinian women; commissioned a report on Israeli violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention; and organized a seminar on that subject in November. It also held meetings, in June and November, with NGOs assisting Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, as a result of which two research projects were initiated with the American University of Beirut and the Welfare Association. An online campaign about Palestine, “181 Posts”, was launched in March, followed by the screening of two Palestinian films and photo and handicraft exhibitions.

On 18 September [E/2014/41 (res. 316(XXVIII))], the Commission welcomed General Assembly resolutions 67/19 [YUN 2012, p. 1426] and 68/12 [YUN 2013, p. 403], by which the Assembly accorded to Palestine the status of non-member observer State in the United Nations and proclaimed 2014 the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, respectively. The Commission called on the international community to support the Government of National Conciliation—formed according to the Palestinian National Reconciliation achieved in May—and requested the ESCWA secretariat to raise the level of its support for the Palestinian people and their institutions at all levels, including the enhancement of human resources for the conflict mitigation and development subprogramme.
Programme and organizational questions

At its twenty-eighth session, ESCWA adopted the draft strategic framework for 2016–2017 [E/2014/41 (res. 317(XXVIII))], the session reports of the ESCWA subsidiary bodies [res. 318(XXVIII)], the amendments introduced to the programme of work for the biennium 2014–2015 [res. 319(XXVIII)], the redesignation of the Technical Committee as the “Executive Committee” and the relevant amendment to its terms of reference [res. 320(XXVIII)], and the redesignation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as the “Economic and Social Commission for Arab States” [res. 321(XXVIII)].

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 17 November [meeting 51], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of ESCWA [E/2014/15/Add.2], adopted resolution 2014/36 without vote [agenda item 13].

Redesignation of the Technical Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as the Executive Committee and amendment of its terms of reference

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting the adoption on 18 September 2014 by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia at its twenty-eighth session of resolution 320(XXVIII),

Endorses the redesignation of the Technical Committee as the Executive Committee and the amendment of its terms of reference as set out in resolution 320(XXVIII), the text of which is annexed to the present resolution.

ANNEX

Resolution 320(XXVIII)

Redesignation of the Technical Committee as the Executive Committee and amendment of its terms of reference

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to its decision of 11 May 2006 concerning the establishment of a technical committee that would meet once every six months to follow up the implementation of the programme of work,

Referring also to the terms of reference of the Technical Committee, as revised at its fifth meeting, held on 6 and 7 April 2011, which stipulate that the Committee shall hold three meetings per biennium, in support of the ministerial session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, to advise and assist the secretariat of the Commission in planning and implementing the programme of work and to take action on any other matters,

Having considered the recommendation of the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting to amend the mandate of the Committee in order to facilitate its work and strengthen its ability to take decisions and respond to regional and international developments,

Having also considered the recommendation of the Technical Committee at its eighth meeting to redesignate the Committee as the Executive Committee and amend its terms of reference, so that it may play a greater role in steering and coordinating the activities of the Commission,

Noting the increasing global and regional challenges and the need to develop swift regional responses to them,

Underscoring the importance of strengthening the intergovernmental engagement of member States in the decision-making processes of the Commission, in particular to ensure an integrated approach to the work of the Commission,

Also decides to redesignate the Technical Committee as the Executive Committee;

2. Also decides to revise the role of the Technical Committee and its terms of reference, with immediate effect, as set out in the annex to the present resolution;

3. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia to follow up on the implementation of the present resolution.

Annex to resolution 320(XXVIII)

Terms of reference of the Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall submit a report on its activities to the Commission at its sessions.
2. The Executive Committee shall convene three meetings in the period between the biennial sessions of the Commission.
3. The Executive Committee shall be entrusted with submitting resolutions and reports to the Economic and Social Council on matters excluding the terms of reference of the Commission.
4. The Executive Committee shall undertake the following:
   (a) Organize the sessions of the Commission;
   (b) Review and adopt the programme of work of the subsidiary committees on the basis of criteria defined by the Executive Committee;
   (c) Ensure consistency between subprogrammes;
   (d) Deal with all matters related to programme planning.
5. The membership of the Executive Committee shall mirror that of the Commission.
6. The Chairs or Vice-Chairs of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission can be invited to the meetings of the Executive Committee.
7. The Executive Committee may propose amendments to its terms of reference, which shall be considered for adoption by the Commission.
8. The Executive Committee shall be chaired by a representative of the country chairing the Commission.