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Fifth session
Beirut, 19-21 December 2011

REPORT**OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN ON ITS FIFTH SESSION
BEIRUT, 19-21 DECEMBER 2011****Summary**

The Committee on Women of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its fifth session at the United Nations House in Beirut from 19 to 21 December 2011.

During the session, the Committee considered steps taken by Arab countries to implement the recommendations made by the Committee at its fourth session; the activities of the ESCWA Centre for Women (ECW) since the fourth session of the Committee; and the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 in the area of the advancement of women. The Committee also took up issues of importance to women's progress and empowerment, including gender mainstreaming into the policies, programmes and activities of public institutions; progress achieved in implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Arab countries; innovative initiatives to end violence against women; women's participation in political leadership and decision-making; and the role of media and communications in empowering women in the Arab world.

This report includes the recommendations made by the Committee within the framework of the Beirut Declaration 2011: Promoting the Role of Women as a Contributing Factor to Change towards Equality in Decision-Making, as well as the most important points discussed under each agenda item.

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Introduction

1. The Committee on Women held its fifth session from 19 to 21 October 2011, pursuant to ESCWA resolution 240 (XXII) of 17 April 2003, which was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2003/9 of 18 July 2004 concerning the establishment within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) of a Committee on Women. In its resolution, the Council decided that the Committee on Women shall hold its sessions biennially, with effect from 2004, and that an inaugural session should be held before the end of 2003. The Committee held its inaugural session in Beirut on 4 and 5 December 2003, its second in Beirut from 8 to 10 July 2004, its third in Abu Dhabi on 14 and 15 March 2007, and its fourth in Beirut from 21 to 23 October 2009.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AT ITS FIFTH SESSION

Beirut Declaration 2011: Promoting the Role of Women as a Contributing Factor to Change towards Equality in Decision-Making

2. The Committee on Women held its fifth session from 19 to 21 October 2011 at a crucial stage and in the midst of fundamental transformations that were leaving their mark on the future of Arab society. Women were both influencing and being influenced by those developments, which posed challenges to preserving and building upon gains for women; increasing fairness, participation and equality; ending violence and discrimination against women; and empowering women to participate actively in all aspects of development and decision-making.

3. Participants commended the struggle of Arab women everywhere, and expressed their solidarity with victims of human rights violations, in particular women in situations of armed conflict and societies in transition. They praised the role played by Arab women in efforts to promote democracy, development and progress in a spirit of justice, participation, equality and respect for human rights. They saluted the Palestinian women, commanding their role in confronting the Israeli occupation and supporting the right of Palestinian women and the Palestinian people as a whole to an independent and fully sovereign State with Jerusalem as its capital, where Palestinian women would be free of the obstacles to progress posed by the Israeli occupation.

4. This Declaration affirms the commitment to achieving justice, equality and a greater role for women in sustainable development and democracy building. Its approach is based on an objective and realistic assessment of the situation of women and the expected accomplishments during the biennium until the sixth session of the Committee on Women.

5. At the end of the session, the participants adopted a number of recommendations for member countries and for ESCWA on the advancement of women.

6. The recommendations to member countries were as follows:

- (a) Continue to follow up implementation of recommendations issued by the Committee on Women at its fourth session that have not yet been implemented;
- (b) Empower rural women by integrating their priorities and needs into national plans, programmes and policies;
- (c) Promote gender mainstreaming, with a view to achieving gender fairness and equality in major policies, programmes and plans, and in national budgets and budgets for ministries, government institutions and other sectors;

(d) Provide support for strengthening the institutional structure of national machineries for women, and supply them with the necessary financial and human resources, with a view to promoting women's advancement, achieving fairness and equality between women and men, and establishing follow-up and monitoring mechanisms to measure the effects of gender equality and women's empowerment programmes and activities;

(e) Establish a consolidated gender-disaggregated database based on specialized data and national observatories, with a view to improving the quantity and quality of statistical methodologies for measuring the condition of women;

(f) Urge countries that have not already done so to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol thereto, including the following:

- (i) Ratify the Convention and its attached Protocol; put in place a mechanism for monitoring and following up implementation by public institutions; and adopt the measures necessary for withdrawing reservations, in cooperation with national machineries for women;
- (ii) Amend regulations and laws that discriminate against women, in particular labour and social security laws, and legislation related to political participation, nationality and personal status, including the age of marriage;
- (iii) Conduct in-depth studies of the harmonization of national legislation with the Convention;
- (iv) End all forms of violence against women through national policies, laws, action plans and the necessary services;
- (v) Criminalize violence against women, prosecute violators, and provide rehabilitation services for both perpetrators and survivors;
- (vi) Conduct awareness campaigns on the negative effects of violence against women in conjunction with national machineries for women, government institutions and civil society;
- (vii) Provide the necessary resources for relevant services and make them available over a range of geographic areas;

(g) Increase the proportion of women in both parliamentary and local representative bodies, through the following:

- (i) Adopt measures to improve the status of women, including reforming electoral systems, applying the principle of proportional representation in nominating candidates, adjusting the size of large electoral districts, and sequencing candidates in electoral lists;
- (ii) Temporarily adopt positive discrimination in favour of women, including quotas for women in elected bodies and electoral lists of political parties and groups, with a view to promoting women's participation in political leadership and public decision-making;

(h) Protect and expand gains made by women, and promote their appointment to leadership positions, decision-making bodies, constitutional committees, transitional councils, reform commissions, and peacekeeping and negotiating bodies; and support implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) concerning women, peace and security;

(i) Work with public and private media to promote programmes to change prevailing mindsets and negative stereotypes about women, enhance women's status as citizens and partners of men in all areas, and raise levels of awareness about women's issues and international and regional conventions, declarations and measures to end discrimination and violence against women and to empower them;

(j) Increase the participation of women in information and communications technology (ICT) and the building of an information and knowledge society through the following:

- (i) Conduct training sessions and programmes to provide women with ICT skills that allow them to benefit from electronic commercial, educational, employment, health and e-government services;
- (ii) Empower national machineries and women organizations to use ICT to advocate for women's causes;
- (iii) Adopt the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting on Strategies and Media Campaigns to Promote the Empowerment of Women in the ESCWA Region, held in Beirut on 21 and 22 June 2011, and annex them to the recommendations of the current session for submission in the report to the twenty-seventh session of ESCWA to be held in May 2012;

(k) Encourage cooperation and coordination between development partners in civil society, government, legislative bodies, the private sector, media institutions, the donor community, and international and regional organizations for the advancement of women, the implementation of international conventions concerning women, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and the achievement of the Goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration; and increase cooperation and coordination between the ESCWA Centre for Women (ECW) and relevant regional agencies and organizations such as the League of Arab States, the Arab Women Organization, the Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR), and others;

(l) Update ECW on the following:

- (i) Reports on best practices and successful initiatives and experiences;
- (ii) Changes or developments in the status of women reflected by statistics, legislation, decrees or strategies;
- (iii) Documents, studies, reports or other materials concerning women for ESCWA to post on its website.

7. The recommendations to ECW were as follows:

- (a) Circulate best practices and successful experiences documented by member countries for the benefit of other countries;
- (b) Offer technical assistance and advisory services in support of implementation by member countries of the recommendations;
- (c) Follow up implementation of the recommendations periodically (annually) and continuously;
- (d) Prepare a periodic booklet on national machineries for the advancement of women and raise public awareness about them;
- (e) Publish a periodic booklet on the situation of women in the ESCWA region, including baseline indicators.

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

A. PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN SINCE THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN (Agenda item 4)

1. Implementation of activities related to the advancement of women under ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011, and pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee on Women at its fourth session

8. The secretariat, referring to document E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/3, gave a presentation on the activities of ECW since the fourth session of the Committee on Women. These included:

(a) *Studies and research*: Progress in the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the ESCWA Region: A gender lens (2010); Gender Mainstreaming in the Policies, Programmes and Activities of Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs in ESCWA Member Countries (2011); Good Practices and Success in Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Arab Countries (2011); and a report on the situation of Arab women in 2011, entitled “Political Leadership and Participation in Decision-Making”;

(b) *Meetings and training workshops*: workshop on gender mainstreaming for ministries of labour and national machineries for women (2010); workshop on integrating a gender perspective into national budgets (2011); workshop on the role of national machineries for women in promoting the full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the ESCWA region (2010); workshop on the role of Arab parliaments in implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and ending violence against women (2010); training on the protection of women in conflict situations: Security Council resolution 1325(2000) (2011);

(c) *Manuals, newsletters, and information kits*: a brochure entitled “Arab Women at a Glance”; a brochure on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Arab countries; a webpage for ECW; an electronic network to serve as a forum for communication between ECW and international non-governmental organizations;

(d) *Advisory services and technical assistance to member countries*: services were provided in the following areas: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; gender mainstreaming; strategic planning; leadership and negotiation skills; and political participation;

(e) *Field projects and extrabudgetary activities*: providing support to a number of member countries for a project on strengthening national machineries for women to achieve gender equality and empower women, with the support of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) in coordination with the other regional commissions and with funding from the Italian Government; and providing support to Lebanon for a project to establish an observatory for Arab women as part of a pilot project to be implemented by the Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development in Lebanon in cooperation with ESCWA, the Islamic Development Bank and the World Bank.

9. At the end of the presentation, the secretariat noted the need to find additional sources of extrabudgetary funding to meet the needs of member countries during the critical transitional stage through which the Arab region was passing, and called on member countries to support the creation of a development fund for that purpose.

10. In the discussion following the presentation, a participant asked for clarification of the assessment and follow-up mechanisms used to monitor the benefits of ESCWA workshops and studies to the countries involved. Participants then took up the recommendations of the Committee at its fourth session that had yet to

be implemented in a number of countries, wondering whether they should be incorporated into the recommendations of the current session or if ESCWA should follow them up with each country individually. The secretariat noted that a decision about which of the two possibilities was most feasible would be made in consultation with member countries.

11. A participant noted that the report on progress achieved in the advancement of women since the fourth session of the Committee had not addressed the question of coordination between regional women's organizations on the one hand, and ESCWA and the United Nations women's organizations on the other, or on the support provided by ESCWA to various Arab countries.

12. A representative of the Arab Women Organization gave an overview of some of that organization's activities with a view to enhancing integration between it and ESCWA. She touched on the following: (a) the drafting of a manual on quantitative and qualitative indicators to assist countries with writing and submitting their reports on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; (b) the drafting of an Arab strategy to combat violence against women; and (c) implementation of the agreement on coordination and information exchange signed between the Arab Women's Organization and ESCWA.

2. Actions taken by member countries in the field of advancement of women pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee on Women at its fourth session

13. The representatives of Iraq, the Sudan, Jordan and Palestine respectively gave presentations on measures taken by their countries to implement recommendations issued by the Committee on Women at its fourth session.

14. The representative of Iraq noted that although technical reasons had prevented her country from taking part in the fourth session, the measures taken by her country in the area of women's empowerment had been consistent with its recommendations. Those measures included the allocation of 50 per cent of posts in the Health and Education Ministries and 30 per cent of posts in other ministries to women; ensuring participation by women's organizations in the drafting of a law on the protection of women against domestic violence, a strategy to combat violence and a strategy for women's advancement; and the withdrawal of a reservation to article 9 of the Convention in 2011. She noted the need for greater gender awareness and for gender-sensitive budgets, from the level of the officials responsible for drafting national plans to junior staff.

15. The representative of the Sudan gave an overview of his country's achievements in implementing the recommendations of the Committee on Women at its fourth session. Those achievements included the creation of a centre for research and documentation of information on women within the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security; update of educational curricula and revision of school textbooks to remove negative stereotypes of women; and the strengthening of the role of women in political life by empowering them to occupy leadership positions in the Government, public administration and political parties, notably through a minimum of 25 per cent quota for women in Parliament and legislative assemblies.

16. The representative of Jordan pointed to a number of her country's achievements in the area of advancement of women, including the adoption by seven ministries of gender-sensitive budgets and the withdrawal of its reservation to article 15, paragraph 4 of the Convention. She stressed the need to clarify the concepts related to gender in order to prevent confusion with negative concepts prevalent in Arab societies. Women had achieved progress in the public sector, but the posts they occupied were not as senior as might be wished. While the political will for women's empowerment existed, lack of social acceptance and human and financial resources remained a problem.

17. The representative of Palestine spoke about her country's major achievements related to women's empowerment, stressing that the political system in Palestine supported the advancement of women. She

stressed the importance of establishing a Ministry of Women's Affairs to increase women's participation in decision-making. She pointed to the establishment of the National Women's Employment Committee; the decision to mainstream gender in budget development; the suspension of legal provisions regarding honour killings; and the accession by more women to decision-making positions, including five women ministers, a woman governor and a woman deputy governor. She stressed that the full empowerment of women could only be realized through the establishment of a free and independent Palestinian State.

B. GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS (Agenda item 5)

1. Guide on gender mainstreaming in the policies, programmes, and activities of ministries of labour and social affairs in ESCWA member countries

18. The secretariat gave a presentation on the guide prepared by ECW to mainstream gender in the policies, programmes and activities of ministries of labour and social affairs in ESCWA member countries. The guide used a participatory approach and was designed to serve as a reference for countries to consult on the mainstreaming process. The main goals of the guide consist of capacity-building and skills development for data collection and analysis with a view to adopting a common conceptual framework and building partnerships with the relevant ministries, institutions and national machineries for women in the first stage. The second stage would include practical implementation of acquired skills in the relevant ministries and institutions, and agreement on a follow-up and assessment mechanism through which to submit reports to ECW, which would in turn analyse them with a view to reaching final conclusions and offering recommendations.

19. The third stage would consist of exchanging expertise, successful experiences and lessons learned, following up and assessing the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming in public institutions, as well as drafting a practical guide on analysing those institutions from a gender perspective focusing on practical experiences.

20. The secretariat then reviewed the measures required to mainstream gender in institutions, including the collection of qualitative and quantitative data needed for the analysis of policies, programmes and activities from a gender perspective and the establishment of action plans and follow-up and assessment mechanisms. There was a need for political will, partnerships between national machineries for women, ministries and women's institutions, follow-up of implementation of action plans, monitoring of gender equality initiatives, and capacity-building for gender mainstreaming on all levels. The secretariat also provided an overview of steps taken by ESCWA towards gender mainstreaming, noting that the Commission would begin implementing a trial plan to mainstream gender and empower women within its secretariat. That plan was expected to be implemented on a United Nations system-wide level provisionally in 2012 and to be adopted officially in 2013.

2. Efforts of the Arab countries to mainstream gender in public institutions

21. Representatives of Jordan, Yemen, Palestine, Lebanon, Bahrain and Morocco respectively gave presentations on their countries' experiences with mainstreaming gender into the policies, programmes and activities of ministries of labour and social affairs.

22. The representative of Jordan stressed the need for gender-sensitive plans in all areas, and the importance of studying and analysing the gender dimension on the level of administrative implementation. Her country had begun to apply a gender perspective with regard to public sector posts. But that was not enough. The concept of gender needed to be extended to the private sector and civil society associations, where women tended to be appointed to lower posts, while important posts were reserved for men. The public, private and civil society sectors all needed to redouble their efforts to mainstream gender. She pointed

that the gender concept was comprehensive and stressed the need to distinguish the concept of gender from other terms that were in conflict with the Islamic Sharia and Arab culture.

23. The representative of Yemen noted that her country's National Women's Committee was working to identify gender needs in various areas in order to incorporate them into its fourth five-year plan (2011-2015) and investment programme. She gave an overview of the methodology followed, the rationale for including gender needs in the five-year plan, and the areas covered (industry, environment, education, health, media and culture). She drew attention to the necessary steps for women's empowerment, which included expanding the responsibilities of the national machineries for women; increasing the number of women in decision-making positions, specifically in local councils, the Parliament and the Shura Council to 30 per cent; and setting up hotlines and shelters for women survivors of violence.

24. The representative of Palestine gave an overview of the goals of her country's Ministry of Women's Affairs and key successes it had achieved in reinforcing the Government's commitment and developing gender follow-up and assessment mechanisms. Achievements included: Cabinet approval of a cross-sectoral strategic national plan for gender; establishment of a gender unit within the police; mainstreaming gender issues into the ministries of agriculture and culture; and a Cabinet decision to mainstream gender in the budget development. The representative of Palestine also touched on other achievements, including progress in addressing violence against women and increasing women's participation in the labour market, and the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

25. The representative of Lebanon said that liaison officers had been assigned to most Government offices to address gender equality, and that a series of capacity-building and training meetings, workshops and dialogues had been held to prepare them for tasks related to women's empowerment. Highlighting women's issues gave women the sense that they were not abandoned and enhanced their self-confidence. An economic environment conducive to women's empowerment was also important, because financial independence from men would better enable women to realize their aspirations.

26. The representative of Bahrain stressed that comprehensive sustainable development could not be achieved in Bahraini society without equal partnership between women and men. The National Conference for Bahraini Women, which had been held for the first time in 2010, produced a national model for mainstreaming gender needs. Subsequently, a Royal Decree had been issued to establish a national committee to follow-up implementation of that model within the Government's work programme. He listed steps taken to implement the model, of which the most notable had been the following: the drafting of a budget that responded to the needs of women and used gender as a criterion for allocating and monitoring Government expenditures; the establishment of units to ensure equal opportunities in ministries and official institutions; and a draft plan for implementation of the national model. He gave an overview of training programmes implemented by his country as part of the mainstreaming of women's needs into the development process.

27. The representative of Morocco explained her country's Agenda for Gender Equality (2011-2015), which had the goal of adopting fairness and equality between men and women in all fields and mainstreaming gender into public policies and development programmes. She identified the agenda's priority areas, which were adopting gender equality in all public institutions; ensuring fair and equal access for girls and boys to quality education; providing health and basic infrastructure services; achieving gender equality in civil rights; eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women; ensuring fairness and equality in access to decision-making positions on both the administrative and political levels; combating gender discrimination and inequality in the labour market; ending poverty and other scourges afflicting women and girls; disseminating a culture of equality; and combating gender stereotypes.

C. PROGRESS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES

1. Implementation of the Convention in the Arab countries: Comparative analysis of achievements and challenges

28. The representative of the secretariat, referring to document E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/4, gave a brief overview of the situation of women in the ESCWA region. She then reviewed progress achieved in implementing the Convention, including ratifications of the Convention; accessions to the Optional Protocol; withdrawal of certain reservations; amendment of laws to harmonize them with the provisions of the Convention, including nationality laws and family legislation, particularly regarding age of marriage and guardianship of children; establishment of family courts and family insurance funds; amendment of Sharia court procedures; enactment of quota legislation to increase the number of women candidates for Parliament and municipal councils; and the drafting of national strategies to end violence against women.

29. The secretariat reviewed challenges that posed obstacles to gender equality and progress for women in the Arab region. They included the following: reservations placed by some ESCWA member countries to key articles of the Convention (notably articles 2 and 16); the lack of laws prohibiting trafficking in humans and providing assistance to survivors (article 6); failure to grant women equal rights to acquire, change, retain and transmit their nationality (article 9); continued inequality between men and women with regard to legal capacity and equal treatment before the courts (article 15); and failure to set a minimum age for marriage and compulsory registration procedures for marriages (article 16).

2. Creative initiatives to combat violence against women in the Arab countries

30. The secretariat gave a presentation based on an analytical study done by ECW that reviewed innovative initiatives taken to combat violence against women, and all forms of gender-based violence in the Arab world. Those initiatives were in the following areas: reporting crimes of violence; prevention and protection programmes for women survivors of violence; psychological counselling programmes for women survivors of violence; hotlines; legal assistance programmes; and awareness campaigns. The secretariat gave several examples of successful experiences in a number of ESCWA member countries. Those included the following: the establishment of family protection departments in the Ministries of the Interior of Jordan and the Sudan; an increase in the number of women police officers trained to deal with violence against women in Bahrain and Yemen; the establishment of a number of civil society institutions to provide services to women victims of violence (such as KAFA – Enough Violence and Exploitation in Lebanon, the Lebanese Council to Resist Violence against Women, and the Beit Hawa women's shelter in Egypt); the assignment of lawyers to follow up violence cases in the courts; a campaign against sexual harassment in the street in Egypt; and a campaign against early marriage in Jordan.

31. Major social obstacles to psychological counselling programmes included the lack of acceptance by society of the concept of psychological counselling, restrictions on women's freedom of movement, and failure to attend sessions regularly. Stress was placed on the need for free hotline services to be made available in both rural and urban areas 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

3. Exchange of successful experiences and lessons learned on the national level

32. The representative of Jordan said that her country had prepared a guide for lawyers on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Ten cases had already been brought to court following the guide, of which two had reached verdicts. She stressed the importance of progress reports as a tool for women's empowerment. The gap in women's political and economic participation remained wide, and greater efforts were needed to bridge it. The Women's Complaints Office offered a number of assistance services through a one stop shop, including a free hotline. Jordan had pioneered legal services in 1982, but legal costs were high, and there was a need to establish a network of lawyers who would take

women's rights cases for lower fees. The cost of psychological counselling services was also high, and there was a shortage of qualified counsellors. She called for well planned and appropriately themed awareness campaigns. She noted with satisfaction the developments taking place in the justice system of Jordan, including a rise in the number of women working in the legal system.

33. The representative of Iraq noted that while there was a number of gender equality provisions of the Iraqi Constitution, enforcement was lacking. Her country acceded to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. A draft law was prepared to combat trafficking in persons which has been a widespread phenomenon since 2003. The draft law has not yet been submitted for a vote. Several laws to improve the situation of women had been enacted since 2003, including laws on quotas for women, a woman's right to transfer her nationality to her children, and compulsory education for both girls and boys through the age of 12. Facilities were available to Iraqi women to help them balance their domestic duties and work obligations, including childcare services in all government departments and six-month maternity leave at full salary with an option for an additional six months at half salary, and a full year at full salary for twins. Women's empowerment activities in Iraq included the following: campaigns to improve health care, demands for more women's health centres, a national poverty reduction strategy and increased attention to rural women. Iraqi women were frequently victims of terrorist, sectarian and domestic violence, and their suffering had increased since the invasion of Iraq. Work was underway to draft a law to protect women from domestic violence.

34. The representative of Palestine said the worst form of violence in her country stemmed from the occupation. But domestic violence was also a problem. Palestinian women had worked since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, and had achieved progress in several significant areas, including the establishment of a complaints unit in every ministry, a women's grievances bureau, a centre for legal counselling, and shelters. Women's education had increased notably with improvements in education infrastructure. There were schools in almost every village, although accessibility was affected by political instability in the country. Hotlines were not available at all ministries, but were provided by civil associations, and by legal and social counselling centres.

35. The representative of Yemen said that the authorities in her country had asked two religious scholars to examine the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women from a religious point of view, and they had confirmed that the Convention was not in conflict with the Islamic Sharia. She called for an in-depth study by a respected religious institution such as Al-Azhar in order to verify that the Convention's provisions did not conflict with the Sharia, which would pave the way for the withdrawal of reservations. The Optional Protocol should be ratified by Arab countries, although certain Governments opposed it strongly. Her country had achieved several successes in the area of women's empowerment, including persuading the Government to include the goal of ending violence against women in the national five-year plan, and the establishment of shelters for victims of violence. However, programmes to combat violence against women continued to lack funding.

36. Commenting on the progress report, she noted that it was not "quantitative", in the sense that it did not measure progress in achieving the indicators concerning the advancement of women, and failed to cover a number of problems facing the Arab countries, including trafficking in children, particularly girls, and the issues related to displaced women, refugees, the disabled, and domestic servants. The secretariat noted that the report was a joint product of ESCWA and member countries intended to supply the Committee with data on progress achieved, and highlighted the need for coordination and cooperation to improve the accuracy of information contained in ESCWA reports.

37. The representative of the Sudan noted that her country had not yet ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women owing to its reservations on certain provisions that it considered to be in conflict with the Islamic Sharia. Her country had prepared a report on the reasons for its non-ratification to be submitted to the relevant committee. The Sudan had achieved a number of

successes, mostly in the area of combating violence, which was exacerbated by armed conflict, especially in the Darfur region. After the separation of the South following the referendum conducted in the wake of the Naivasha Agreement, the declaration of the Oslo Donors' Conference on the Sudan, which contained explicit provisions on violence, had been adopted. The police had created child and women's protection units, and hotlines and legal assistance units for prisons had been set up. She closed by stressing the need for cooperation between Arab countries, exchange of experiences and best practices, and projecting an Arab consensus in international forums.

38. The representative of Morocco noted that her country had withdrawn all of its reservation to the Convention, with the exception of its reservation to article 2, and had made great strides in women's access to decision-making positions. The women's empowerment programme, conducted in cooperation with the United Nations and national agencies, had adopted a comprehensive approach that reached across various economic and social sectors, and was in the process of implementation. Civil rights associations and the relevant national agencies were lobbying for a law criminalizing spousal violence, in the light of recent studies demonstrating that was the most prevalent form of violence against women. She stressed the need to engage men in the campaigns to combat violence against women, as men can play a significant role in that regard. She emphasized that the basic challenges included the implementation of laws for combating violence against women, changing mentalities and ensuring the necessary financial and human resources for women's centres. Her country had established a family insurance fund in 2010.

D. WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC DECISION-MAKING: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS (Agenda item 7)

39. The representative of the secretariat, referring to document E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/5, presented a comparative analysis of women's participation in public decision-making. She presented some figures on women's gains in that area, which lagged behind those in the private sector. The situation on the ground belied the theory that improvements in women's education would lead to greater participation in the labour market and in decision-making in the private sector, which in turn would be reflected by higher positions in the public sector. The number of women representatives in the world's parliaments continued to fall short of desired levels, and was at its lowest levels in Arab countries.

40. The low representation of women in public decision-making was associated with five key factors: (a) level of development; (b) gross national product per capita; (c) the political system; (d) interpretations of religion that were discriminatory to women; and (e) prevailing political culture. The number of women on executive and legislative committees of political parties and decision-making bodies and their electoral lists also needed to be taken into account.

41. The secretariat presented the model undertaken by women in the political arena, which was based on the principle of reaching a "critical mass" of women to qualify them for leadership and decision-making positions. The model highlighted a negative relationship between the level of the party's religiosity and women's chances to reach leadership positions. It also pointed to a positive relationship between women holding leadership positions and the percentage nominated on electoral lists.

42. Several representatives of member countries commented on women's participation in decision-making based on their own countries' experiences. The representative of Kuwait wondered about the extent to which women benefited from the existing coalitions in her country's legislative elections. The secretariat responded that since coalitions were the only framework in Kuwait for nominating candidates, women should join them where the opportunity presented itself. Coalitions, alliances and initiatives to gain votes and qualify candidates were all paths to increasing women's access to decision-making positions.

43. The representative of Palestine said that her country had gone through two electoral processes under a mixed electoral system that combined proportional with individual representation lists in the second round. Proportional representation lists offered greater opportunities for women to enter the political arena. But

women often lacked the funds necessary to run in elections, and were sometimes let down by their coalition partners.

44. The representative of Jordan said that women's participation in the political arena continued to be a great challenge. The question was not merely a women issue, but involved democracy and political life as a whole. Jordan had had several successful experiences, including the establishment of the Jordan National Forum for Women and greater representation for women in political parties. The three main issues of concern to women on the party level were representation within parties, representation within party leaderships, and the attention paid by parties to women's issues. She stressed that party participation by women should not be measured merely by numbers of women, but by the number of women in leadership positions. Women who were not members of political parties could influence party programmes by pressuring parties, candidates and members of parliament.

45. The representative of Yemen said that women who attained positions of power might not necessarily advocate for women's issues, and that political parties failed to focus on women's role in the family.

46. The representative of Bahrain spoke about the women's political empowerment programme that had been implemented by his country since 2006. The programme focused on three issues: partnership, awareness and training. His country's efforts to amend the law on support for political associations to ensure equal financial support for men and women had motivated parties to include more women in their ranks and give them greater access to decision-making positions.

47. The representative of the Sudan stressed that her country's Constitution had guaranteed a woman's right to run for election since 1954. Sudanese women had achieved a number of successes, including the establishment of a forum for women in political parties aiming to mainstream women's issues into party programmes and ensure women's access to high party and parliamentary posts, including nomination for presidency of the Republic. The road ahead is a long one and would require great effort, including raising the level of concern for women's issues among women leaders.

48. The representative of Iraq presented some of the strategies adopted by her country to increase women's electoral participation. Binding directives had been issued to ensure that electoral lists contained one woman for every two men, and that the final results included at least one woman for every three men. The religious authorities had played a constructive role in encouraging citizens, both men and women, to participate in elections by portraying political participation as a religious duty, and by dividing regions into subsections in which a single individual, a man or a woman, should be nominated.

49. The representative of Morocco said that in her country women were members of the parties, but were virtually absent from leadership positions and government administration. Moroccan parties often opposed and undermined measures for women's political empowerment. The greatest challenge was for women activists to create alliances within their parties to apply pressure for power sharing between men and women.

50. The representative of the League of Arab States said that there were three basic issues related to improving women's position in decision-making: building women's coalitions to help women gain access to decision-making positions; women's participation in parties and in drafting party programmes; and bringing more women into the electoral process in all types of electoral systems.

51. Following up on the comments of member countries, the representative of the secretariat said that it was important for member countries to document and exchange successful experiences in increasing women's political participation, because the experiences of certain Arab countries could be better examples for other Arab countries than the experiences of western countries. Empowerment and institutional reinforcement of national machineries for women at both the committee and ministry levels was crucial. Quotas and electoral systems had an important role to play. Proportional representation was important in itself because it encouraged women's participation, as were closed lists, which were more conducive to female candidates

than open lists. She stressed the importance of integrating women into parties and not merely designating electoral districts for women. Religious parties would give positions to women if it was in their political interest to do so, and would nominate them if it had a positive effect on their electoral prospects.

52. The representatives of member countries agreed that the data contained in the study should be more accurate and up-to-date. The representative of the secretariat said that there were always gaps in data and that the discrepancies in time periods covered by member country statistics presented obstacles to comparative analysis. Member countries were requested to agree on a mechanism to provide, update and verify data. The secretariat distributed tables on women in political parties and the public sector to be updated and submitted to ECW by 15 January 2012.

**E. PROMOTING THE ROLE OF MEDIA AND MEANS OF COMMUNICATION IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT
IN THE ARAB REGION: SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNT**
(Agenda item 8)

53. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the role of the media in empowering women in the Arab region. He noted that development media, that is to say, media that focused on the development process and social issues, were almost absent from the region, where political and entertainment media predominated, and that no discernable efforts were being made to create policies or programmes to change that situation. Such media should rely on United Nations international agreements where possible, and should be developed in cooperation with the relevant Arab organizations. He explained that the prominence of women in media was often highlighted at the expense of other women's issues. As women's education and experience levels continued to rise, he expected stiff competition between women and men for high media positions, and men who occupied those positions will struggle hold onto their posts.

54. During the ensuing discussion, participants commented that in most Arab countries, the media presented a stereotypical and negative image of women as a commodity. Efforts to change that situation should be focused on young people, who were extremely influenced by media. Nowhere in the Arab world was there a national media strategy that identified investments conducive to sustainable development. A comprehensive strategy was needed, with implementation programmes and timetables. Media was a double-edged sword and guidelines needed to be put in place to ensure that it was not used in negative ways.

55. The participants also stressed the importance of building the capacity of media, national machineries for women, and women in general to make use of new social media through workshops on the media and women's issues. Government broadcasters should be encouraged to set aside time for social programmes, especially on women, and broadcast them at no charge.

56. Some countries presented successful experiences in using media to highlight the gender gap and empower women, including media awareness campaigns to fight breast cancer and broadcasts specialized in youth and women's issues.

57. After the discussion, the secretariat presented the recommendations of the ESCWA Expert Group Meeting on Media Strategies and Campaigns to Empower Women in the ESCWA Region (Beirut, 21-22 June 2011), and it was agreed to annex them to recommendations of the fifth session of the Committee with a view to their adoption and submission to the ESCWA session scheduled for May 2012.

**F. PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIAL 2012-2013
IN THE FIELD OF ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**
(Agenda item 9)

58. The secretariat, referring to document E/ESCPA/ECW/2011/IG.1/5, gave a presentation on the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 in the field of advancement of women, in the context of its subprogramme 6 on the advancement of women, which aimed to narrow the gender gap, promote exchange of lessons learned among member countries, and increase respect for women's rights in accordance with

international instruments and conferences. Expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement were provided for each objective. Achievement of goals would depend on the following factors: maintenance by member countries of their commitment to implement international agreements and the internationally agreed development goals; political will to reinforce national machineries for women and enhance dialogue with civil society; and sufficient political stability to allow development programmes to operate. The responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies with ECW, which would provide the necessary services and assistance to member countries. The secretariat closed by laying out the expected accomplishments of the subprogramme for the biennium 2012-2013 in the following areas: women's economic participation and greater attention to gender in government institutions; increased women's representation in politics; the use of ICT to empower women; and combating violence against women. ESCWA would contribute to realization of those goals by conducting studies, organizing meetings, providing technical services to countries on demand, and cooperating and coordinating with regional and international organizations.

59. Following consultation between the secretariat and member countries, it was decided that ESCWA would be assigned to prepare a form on basic indicators of advancement of women to be sent to member countries. Completed forms returned by member countries would contribute to databases to be used in studies, and should be updated regularly.

G. DATE AND VENUE OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN
(Agenda item 10)

60. Participants agreed to hold the sixth session of the Committee on Women in Kuwait in October 2013. It had been expected that the fifth session would be held in Kuwait, but circumstances within that country prevented that.

H. OTHER MATTERS
(Agenda item 11)

61. A brief overview was given of the draft report on the status of Arab women in 2011 with respect to political leadership and participation in decision-making, which had been prepared by ECW and addressed the roles of women in political parties, legislative bodies (parliaments and municipal councils), executive bodies, judicial bodies, popular democratic movements, transitional justice and peacebuilding (in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)). The report's conclusions and recommendations called for more effective participation by women in all those areas. The representative of the secretariat reminded participants that they needed to provide data on women in political parties and coalitions no later than 15 January 2012 so that the report could include a comparative analysis of the situation of women in those countries based on the most accurate and up-to-date information.

I. ADOPTION OF BEIRUT DECLARATION 2011: PROMOTING THE ROLE OF WOMEN AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO CHANGE TOWARDS EQUALITY IN DECISION-MAKING
(Agenda item 12)

62. The Declaration was submitted to the participants and adopted with some amendments.

III. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN ON ITS FIFTH SESSION
(Agenda item 13)

63. The Committee on Women adopted the report on its fifth session which contained the recommendations and the Beirut Declaration 2011. The Committee presented its comments on the recommendations and the secretariat took note of the comments made and inserted the proposed amendments into the present version of the report.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. VENUE AND DATE OF SESSION

64. The Committee on Women held its fifth session at the United Nations House in Beirut from 19 to 21 December 2011. The session's proceedings were conducted over six meetings.

B. OPENING

65. At the opening session, Mr. Bashar al-Asaad, representing the Syrian Arab Republic in its capacity as chair of the fourth session of the Committee on Women, gave an opening address in which he expressed gratitude to the participants for attending, and to the countries that had submitted responses to the survey on implementation of the recommendations of the fourth session. He hoped that the fifth session and its recommendations would represent a step forward in the advancement of women, given the issues of crucial importance that it would consider.

66. Mr. Nadim Khouri, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCWA, delivered a speech on behalf of Ms. Rima Khalaf, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCWA. He noted that the Arab region was passing through a historic and unprecedented stage in which various social forces were striving to ensure that change benefited the groups which they represented. The position of women had declined despite the essential role played by women in the wave of popular movements. The main reason for that was failure to distinguish between the corruption that characterized the former regimes and the gains in women's rights that society had achieved under their rule. Despite previous successes, strategies and tools that women's movements had depended on in the past needed to be reconsidered in the light of obstacles that prevented them from transforming themselves into a mass women's movement and working with women of all social classes. He stressed the importance of the session's main theme, equality in political leadership and decision-making, in the light of the popular uprisings that had been going on in the Arab region since the beginning of 2011 and the social and economic factors that limited women's political participation. Young men and women should be empowered to promote that participation through exchange of experiences, contact with women leaders through the world, and alliances and coalitions with political actors and non-governmental organizations.

67. Mr. Khouri signalled that women were being impacted severely by the conflicts going on in the Arab region, which were turning many women into displaced persons and refugees and threatening their safety and the safety of their families. The issue of women and gender equality was an issue for society as a whole. It demanded a redoubling of efforts to create policies, programmes and projects that would improve the status of women, and required cooperation between various development partners, coordination among media actors, and implementation of national legislation that addressed the situation of women on the ground in the region.

68. Ms. Fatima Sbaity-Kasem, coordinator of the fifth session of the Committee on Women, said that women's participation in the popular movements being witnessed in the Arab region was not enough. The capacity of women to influence the course of the ongoing changes and developments needed to be strengthened so that they would not lose the gains that they had previously achieved. She stressed the need to encourage young men and women to adopt the strategy of "presence" by taking part in reform councils and commissions. That should be accompanied by full support for empowering women to publicize their cause and mainstream it into transitional political programmes. The process could be summed up in the principle of mainstreaming gender equality into programmes for transition to democracy and constitutional reform.

69. She added that the gender gap remained wide in the public sector, especially at the level of executive and legislative authorities. Women had achieved substantial progress in a number of areas, including education, health and science, and had made moderate gains in political participation as candidates and elected. But that progress had not been reflected in political leadership and decision-making positions, which continued to be the preserve of men.

70. Ms. Sbeity gave an electronic presentation on the successes achieved by member countries in implementing the recommendations of the fourth session of the Committee on Women and the major challenges remaining. The achievements centred on institutional development, accession to international instruments, the formulation of national strategies and action plans, legislation, education, work and political participation. The challenges included lack of human and material resources for implementation of women's programmes, lack of coordination and follow-up, insufficient statistical data, inadequate awareness and training programmes, widespread illiteracy and poverty, confusion of tradition and custom with religious teachings, and the negative portrayal of women in both Arab and western media. She reiterated the responsibility of every individual, whatever their position, to support the cause of women and gender equality. The present meeting was an opportunity to formulate a conceptual approach to the coming period based on an objective evaluation of the situation of women.

71. The opening session had begun with a screening of an animated video entitled "The Impossible Dream", produced by the United Nations, on the difficulties faced by working women in their daily lives at home and in the workplace, which demonstrated that life for women had not changed much since the film had been made in 1983.

C. ATTENDANCE

72. The session was attended by representatives of national machineries for women, ministries, councils and committees on women from the Arab countries in the capacity of government experts. Observers included representatives of United Nations specialized agencies and programmes, governmental and non-governmental regional and international organizations accredited by the Economic and Social Council; other governmental organizations; national and regional networks, several research centres; and bilateral and multilateral national and regional donors. A number of experts, advisors and academics were also in attendance.

D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

73. Pursuant to article 18 of the Rules of Procedure of ESCWA, which provides that member countries shall assume the presidency of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in Arabic alphabetical order as established by the United Nations, the Republic of the Sudan assumed the presidency of the fifth session, succeeding the Syrian Arab Republic, which had assumed the presidency of the fourth session of the Committee on Women from 21 October 2009 to 19 December 2011. The Committee elected the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic by consensus as First Vice-President and the representative of Iraq as Second Vice-President. The representative of Jordan was elected as Rapporteur.

E. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND PROPOSED ORGANIZATION OF WORK

74. At its first meeting, the fifth session of the Committee on Women adopted the proposed agenda as contained in document E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/L.1. The following is the agenda as adopted:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. Progress achieved in the field of advancement of women since the fourth session of the Committee on Women:
 - (a) Implementation of activities related to the advancement of women under ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011, and pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee on Women at its fourth session;

- (b) Actions taken by member countries in the field of advancement of women pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee on Women at its fourth session.
 - 5. Gender mainstreaming in public institutions:
 - (a) Guide on gender mainstreaming in the policies, programmes, and activities of ministries of labour and social affairs in ESCWA member countries;
 - (b) Efforts of the Arab countries in gender mainstreaming in public institutions.
 - 6. Progress made in the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in the Arab countries:
 - (a) Implementation of the Convention in the Arab countries: Comparative analysis of achievements and challenges;
 - (b) Creative initiatives to combat violence against women in the Arab countries;
 - (c) Exchange of successful experiences and lessons learnt at the national level.
 - 7. Women participation in public decision-making: Comparative analysis.
 - 8. Promoting the role of media and means of communication in women empowerment in the Arab region: Successful experiences and lessons learnt.
 - 9. Programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 in the field of advancement of women.
 - 10. Date and venue of the sixth session of the Committee on Women.
 - 11. Other matters.
 - 12. Adoption of the Beirut Declaration 2011: Promoting the Role of Women as a Contributing Factor to Change towards Equality in Decision-Making.
 - 13. Adoption of the Report of the Committee on Women on its fifth session.
75. At the same meeting, the Committee approved the proposed organization of work put before it in document E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/L.2.

F. DOCUMENTS

76. Annex II lists the documents presented to the Committee on Women at its fifth session.

Annex I

LISTS OF PARTICPANTS

A. ESCWA MEMBER COUNTRIES

Bahrain

Mr. Izz al-Din Khalil al-Muayyid
Director of Administrative and Media Policy
Supreme Council for Women

Ms. Shaima Abdulla Salman
Senior Specialist, Bilateral Relations
Supreme Council for Women

Egypt

Ms. Laila Bahaa El-Din
Ambassador
Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Human
Rights Affairs

Mr. Osman Mohamed Mamdouh
First Secretary
Embassy of Egypt in Lebanon

Iraq

Ms. Ibtehal Kasid Yaiser
Minister of State for Women's Affairs

Mr. Ahmed Khamees Abdullah
Secretary to the Minister

Mr. Walid Abd al-Qader Issa
Chief of Protocol
Embassy of Iraq in Lebanon

Jordan

Ms. Asma Khader
Secretary-General
Jordanian National Commission for Women

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Abdullah bin Darwish al-Amri
Minister Plenipotentiary

Mr. Majed Ramzi Atiyah
First Secretary
Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Lebanon

Kuwait

Ms. Hessa Majed Al Shaheen
Advisor to the Chair
Women's Affairs Committee

Lebanon

Ms. Hayat Arslan
Representative of the First Lady of Lebanon
National Commission for Lebanese Women

Oman

Mr. Suleiman al-Alawi
Charge d'affaires
Embassy of Oman in Lebanon

Palestine

Ms. Rabiha Diab
Minister for Women's Affairs

Ms. Randa Naim Janho
Director of the Minister's Office
Ministry of Women's Affairs

Mr. Hanna George Nahleh
Ministry of Women's Affairs

Qatar

Ms. Aminah Ali Al-Suwaidi
Director, Family Affairs Department
Supreme Council for Family Affairs

Ms. Jawharah Al Mutawa
Supreme Council for Family Affairs

Sudan

Ms. Kadiga Abo El-Gassim Hag Hamed
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Welfare and Social Security

Ms. Manazel El-Sherif al-Hindi
Deputy Director
Department of Women and Family affairs

Mr. Hadi Siddiq Ali Numeiri
Deputy Head of Mission
Embassy of the Sudan in Lebanon

Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Bashar Al-Asaad
Economic Attaché
Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic in Lebanon

Yemen

Ms. Hooriya Mashhur
Minister of Human Rights

Ms. Hana Abdul Rahman Huwaidi
General Director of Development
National Council for Women

Mr. Abd al-Qadir Uthman Muhammad Abid
Director, Women's Affairs Monitoring and
Assessment Department
Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

B. COUNTRIES NOT MEMBERS OF ESCWA

Morocco

Ms. Saida Drissi
Director, Women's Affairs Division
Ministry of Social Development, Family Affairs
and Solidarity

C. UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights

UN-Women, Jordan

Mr. Fateh Azzam
Regional Representative for the Middle East

Ms. Nejma Bouchama

Ms. Nada Darwazeh

D. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Arab Women's Union
Yemeni Women's Union

Ms. Fatimah Ahmad al-Nubi
Deputy Chief, Sayun Branch

Ms. Fathiyyeh Muhammad Abdullah
Deputy Chief, Supreme Council for Motherhood
and Childhood

KAFA Lebanon

Ms. Fawziyyeh Muhsin Muhammad al-Hamidah
Deputy Chief, Taiz Branch

Ms. Zoya Rouhana
Director

Association for the Development of Local Resources, Lebanon

Ms. Batoul Hatem Yahfoufi
Director

Lebanese Association of Women Researchers, Lebanon

Ms. Nahawand al-Qadiri
Professor

Ms. Najla Sabri Hamadeh
Professor

National Committee for the Follow-up of Women's Issues, Lebanon

Ms. Abir Chebaro Ibrahim

Save the Children

Ms. Jumanah Zabaneh
Regional Representative

Lebanese Council of Women, Lebanon

Ms. Aman Kabbara Chaarani
President

E. EXPERTS

Ms. Mona Abbas Fadl
Expert
Bahrain

Ms. Sali al-Mahdi
Expert
Egypt

Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Symbol	Item	Title
E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/INF.1		Information note
E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/L.1	3	Provisional agenda and annotations
E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/L.2	3	Organization of work
	4	Progress achieved in the field of advancement of women since the fourth session of the Committee on Women
E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/3	4 (a)	Implementation of activities related to the advancement of women under ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011, and pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee on Women at its fourth session
	5	Gender mainstreaming in public institutions
E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/2	5 (a)	Guide on gender mainstreaming in the policies, programmes, and activities of ministries of labour and social affairs in ESCWA member countries
	6	Progress made in the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Arab countries
E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/4	6 (a)	Implementation of the Convention in the Arab countries: Comparative analysis of achievements and challenges
E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/CRP.1	6 (b)	Creative initiatives to combat violence against women in the Arab countries
E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/5	7	Women participation in public decision-making: Comparative analysis
E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/WG.2/Report	8	Promoting the role of media and means of communication in women empowerment in the Arab region: Successful experiences and lessons learnt
E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/6	9	Programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 in the field of advancement of women