

As written

*Un-ESCWA Statement to the Thirty-Second Session of
the Commission on Population and Development*

1. The UNITED NATIONS Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), continued to operate a program aiming at drawing attention to the impact of population variables on the quality of life through analysis of demographic data, monitoring the population situation and preparation of population projections and socio-economic indicators. Special attention was given to integrating population aspects into development, assisting in formulation of adequate population policies and disseminating of population knowledge especially information on demographic socio-economic interrelationships.
2. The focus of ESCWA activities on population issues included the following broad areas:
 - a) Assessment and monitoring of the population situation and trends in the ESCWA region.
 - b) Regional cooperation in population policies with special emphasis on formulation and implementation.
 - c) Follow up on the implementation of ICPD Plan of Action at the national and regional levels.
3. In the area of up-dating the demographic indicators and assessing the population situation and trends in the region, ESCWA continued to up-date the demographic indicators for its member states, and analyze data, assess the current situation, and identify population trends in the region. So far, data sheets on ten out of the thirteen ESCWA member states have been completed. The final publication of the "Demographic and related Socio-economic data sheets for the ESCWA region", which is published biannually, will be available for distribution by the end of the second quarter of 1999. Also ESCWA prepares a recurrent publication entitled:

“Population Bulletin”. These two recurrent activities contribute in assessing the population situation and trends in ESCWA member states, in preparing national population projections and in conducting related training workshops on population dynamics.

4. The second area of concern within the ESCWA activities, focused on the regional cooperation and coordination in population policies. A regional meeting on *“Population policies and sustainable development: current situation and future requirements for improvements”* was convened in December 1997, for representatives of Arab Population Committees / Councils, aimed at reviewing and assessing the current population policies, suggesting appropriate modalities and tools for advocacy, identifying follow up and monitoring indicators of policy implementation and impact, and investigating possibilities and means of institutionalizing regional cooperation among national population entities.

ESCWA also organized training workshops on “Interrelations between population policies and Sustainable development” (food and environment). The objective of this workshop was to build and strengthen national capacities of member states through enhancing the technical skills of responsible officials in the National Population Committees / Councils.

5. In this context, ESCWA placed special attention on establishing a policy information system covering the Arab region and integrating databases on population, women, human development and human settlements. The system is gender-sensitive, textual, bilingual and using SYBASE power-builder. This system is aimed at facilitating the monitoring of implementation of the four major global conferences in the field of social development, including ICPD, and at providing a database for the analysis and

monitoring of population policies as well as other social development policies in the region.

6.

The third area of emphasis of ESCWA activities pertained to the follow up of the implementation of ICPD recommendations. In this context and in cooperation with UNFPA and LAS, ESCWA organized the "Arab Conference on the implementation of ICPD program of Action (ICPD + 5), 22-25 September 98. The conference was designed mainly to conduct a review and evaluation of achievements as well as to highlight the constraints facing the Arab countries in implementing the ICPD plan of action during the last 5 years. In preparation for the said conference a survey among Arab countries aiming at evaluating the implementation process was conducted.

7. The findings of the survey were presented to the conference, held in September 98, as well as to several studies on reproductive health, gender issues, population and development strategies in the region, NGO's participation and partnership in ICPD implementation and follow up. The outcome of the conference was the adoption of a set of actions intended to further the implementation process of ICPD + 5.

countries of the region in areas of methodologies and techniques of demographic analysis, population policies and migration. In addition to the recurrent publications:

- (a) Demographic and related socio-economic data sheets
- (b) Population Bulletin, a study on Migration and population policies in ESCWA member countries will be issued in 2000.