



American Model United Nations
ESCWA

Report to the The Economic and Social Council on Population and Social Development

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1 **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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3 At its 48th session, held on 20 November to 23 November, 2010, the Economic
4 and Social Commission of Western Asia (ESCWA), mandated “Social and Population
5 Development” as a priority theme for the 2010-2011 review cycle by considering relevant
6 United Nations plans and programs of action pertaining to the situation of Western Asia
7 and advise future actions to be taken in this topic area.

8 On the theme this body held collaborative sessions elaborating on four key social
9 and population development issues and passed one resolution . The four priority areas
10 addressed was unemployment, Iraq and its social development, Immigration and
11 population mobility, and the advancement of women in the region. The Commission
12 adopted resolution one, and decided to recommend it to the Economic and Social Council
13 (ECOSOC).

14 Due to high population growth within the Western Asia region, unemployment is
15 on the rise. With more women and youth joining the workforce, job scarcity within the
16 region is a reality. More and more jobs require skilled labor and techniques and ESCWA
17 feels that women, men, and youth could benefit from new and improved techniques in
18 their education to be qualified for the jobs in the region.

19 Iraq after many years of turmoil is starting to rebuild. EWSCA feels that social
20 development within Iraq needs more consideration and assistance. There are three areas
21 of social development that need more work: Education, Public Health, Political and
22 Social Empowerment. Education could improve by having more monetary investment
23 and also incentives for families to send their children to school. Public Health could
24 improve dramatically by having more access to medicine, vitamins, and counseling for
25 those people who need these things. By giving more power to local governments,
26 Political and Social Empowerment could feasibly stabilize the state.

27 Immigration and population mobility is a giant hurdle that the Western Asia region
28 has to overcome. Palestinian refugees were one of the issues that was discussed within
29 the committee. The body discussed the possibility of creating a free movement region in
30 which citizens from ESCWA states would not require visas to enter into the member
31 states. However, the issue of reducing trade barriers and of allowing free movement of
32 capital within the region was considered as a positive suggestion. This would bring
33 countries in the region together and create job opportunities in Arab countries that usually
34 export immigrants to the Gulf countries.

35 The final topic discussed at the committee was the advancement of women within
36 the region. ESCWA felt that while it was pertinent to Social Development, it would be a
37 viable option to talk as a main topic at one of the next Committee meetings.

SUBJECT OF RESOLUTION: Social Development: Population and Social Development

SUBMITTED TO: The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

SPONSORS: Kuwait, Bahrain, Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan

38 *The Economic and Social Council*

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40 *Deeply concerned* with the dire conditions faced by Palestinian refugees residing within
41 the Western Asia region,

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43 *Recalling* the previous recommendations put forth regarding Palestine in S.RES.242,

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45 *Reaffirming* that little has been done so far to address said conditions in their current
46 situation,

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48 *Bearing in mind* the skilled Palestinian workers whose potential contributions to the
49 region are being underutilized,

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51 *Recognizing* the efforts of certain Economic and Social Council of Western Asia
52 (ESCWA), member states to promote the improvement of status of Palestinians within
53 their borders,

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55 1. *Urges* member states of the ESCWA region to act collectively to improve the
56 temporary conditions of Palestinian refugees by granting restricted residency status for
57 those refugees who have been living within the host countries for a specific period of
58 time in order to attempt to provide opportunities for them to work in the formal economy;

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60 2. Suggests that the aforementioned residency does not include:

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62 (a) The right to vote;

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64 (b) The right to hold public office;

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66 (c) The access to public social service;

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68 (d) The possibility of public employment;

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70 4. *Reminds* all states that the above suggestions are temporary in nature.

71 Passed, Yes: 6 / No: 0 / Abstain: 3

73 **Chapter II**

74 **CONSIDERATION OF POPULATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

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76 **A. REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT**

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78 Throughout the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
79 population growth rates over the past decade have exceeded world averages. As Member
80 States populations continue to grow youth ages 15-24 expand to create a larger
81 percentage of the population. ESCWA Member States will refer to this phenomenon
82 throughout the report as the youth bulge. This phenomenon has led to an increase in
83 unemployment for people between the ages of 15 and 24.

84 As a result of the youth bulge Member States face a variety of economic and
85 political challenges. Economic development and job creation has failed to keep pace with
86 population growth, resulting in the unemployment of large portions of the population
87 between the ages of 15 and 24.

88 The effects of the youth bulge on unemployment in Member States is
89 compounded by the relatively new trend of women entering the workforce. ESCWA
90 Member States promote the introduction of women into the workforce and see this as a
91 positive and encouraging sign of progress in our societies. However, it is important to
92 note this phenomenon exacerbates the unemployment of people aged 15-24 in the region.

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94 Considering these general factors two questions must be posed:

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101 The ESCWA recommends member states view the youth bulge as a potential asset
102 rather than a barrier to development. Many countries have used the youth bulge to
103 capitalize on high population growth rates, utilizing large workforces has proven to be a
104 robust driver of economic growth. This development strategy advocates inexpensive and
105 abundant large scale labor, and is applicable in Member States. To ensure the viability of
106 this strategy Member States must take a variety of measures, including but not limited to:

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1. Structural reforms in the education structures of states to create an educated
class of skilled workers capable of maintaining competitiveness in a globalized
world economy.

a. Member States are recommended to incorporate modern technology into
their educational curriculum. This will ensure the continued
competitiveness of Member States education systems in a globalized
economy. The private sector demands a competent workforce, and the
education systems of Member States must adapt to supply this need.

b. The construction of incentive schemes to ensure high rates of school
attendance. It is of the utmost importance that heads of families understand
the importance of sending their children to school. The values of parents
concerning education plays a large role when determining whether or not a
child is successful in school. The ESCWA would recommend states move

120 to design systems of incentives, noting the successes of the
121 *Oportunidades* program employed in Mexico and the Child-Feeding
122 plans implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa. These Child-Feeding plans
123 promote school attendance by providing a food ration to all female
124 students attending classes regularly. They also promote the education of
125 women, while helping feed impoverished rural families. ESCWA is not
126 recommending that these plans be copied directly, but instead use these
127 programs as models of what is possible in designing incentive schemes to
128 ensure higher rates of school attendance.

129 2. A comprehensive reassessment of specific governmental regulations on the
130 ability of corporations and other private enterprises to operate freely within
131 Member States at the national and regional level. Member States within the
132 ESCWA benefit from having large amounts of inexpensive labor, it is necessary to
133 ease the act of doing business in the ESCWA region, in order to improve and
134 increase the potential for employing all of these individuals. The ESCWA
135 recommends all Member States take action to implement measures including but
136 not limited to:

137 a. The establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZ), designed to lure
138 private investment from regional big heads into Middle Eastern nations.
139 These zones would provide favorable tax rates and other incentives to
140 encourage private investment in geographically strategic areas, such as port
141 cities and other urban areas near trade routes. The ESCWA would
142 recommend giving preference to labor intensive industries, in order to best
143 combat unemployment.

144 b. The ESCWA recommends reforming of legal codes that constrict the
145 ability of private enterprises to operate and invest in the region. The
146 ESCWA recommends Member States conduct a thorough review of legal
147 codes and bureaucratic procedures with the goal of removing obstacles to
148 business. By removing potential hindrances to business operations, the
149 ESCWA anticipates that private sector investment will increase, therefore
150 working to ameliorate the problem of unemployment.

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152 This commission urges ESCWA Member States to exercise considerable
153 discretion when employing recommendations stated in this report. The ESCWA
154 understands that the developing world historically has had imperfect results from
155 allowing private enterprises free reign within it. This body does not condone policies that
156 in a manner would set back the human development of Member States, pollute the
157 environment of the region, or cultivate political instability amongst governments.
158 Ultimately, the ESCWA views the role of private enterprises as beneficial, but it is
159 nonetheless necessary to remain cautious because of the potential for harm when certain
160 sectors are left unregulated.

161 162 **B. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN IRAQ**

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164 Over the past three decades Iraq has been plagued with instability, and its war torn
165 history has made it a unique state in the region. These circumstances call for ESCWA

166 Member States to discuss further the implementation of social development programs to
167 successfully address ongoing population challenges in the context of this topic area. The
168 ESCWA recommends and stresses the necessity of expanding education, public health, and
169 political and social empowerment to meet these growing challenges. To reform and
170 develop the education system in Iraq the ESCWA recommends adopting the following
171 actions:

172 1. The ESCWA will begin with large scale investment in the educational
173 infrastructure of the country especially primary education facilities. Iraq's recent
174 history has been plagued by conflict such as the Iran Iraq war during the 1980's,
175 the Persian Gulf war in 1991, and the United States of America invasion of Iraq in
176 2003, which has resulted in vast destruction and degradation of the educational
177 capacity of the nation. Increasing this capacity would encompass a two tiered
178 program involving:

179 a. The promotion of facility construction programs to ensure
180 every community can fulfill the demand for primary education.
181 Investment should be allocated to supply the physical aspects of education
182 such as; building schools, supplying textbooks, and teaching materials.
183 Expanding this infrastructure will help alleviate the problem
184 of unemployment in Iraq by providing jobs in both the education and
185 industrial sector.

186 b. Teacher training programs from neighboring states in which
187 potential teachers from Iraq could receive the necessary training from
188 instruction facilities in states with well developed education programs.

189 2. Advocates and encourages the implementation of widespread school feeding
190 programs in the Iraqi countryside. Government investment and aid should be
191 allocated to this program in order to ensure children from impoverished families
192 are encouraged to enroll and attend school. These school feeding programs would
193 target female students in an attempt to ensure that education is accessible to both
194 genders. If capacity exists the ESCWA recommends student be given a monthly
195 food ration for their family as an incentive to attend school. This would serve two
196 functions it would alleviate food insecurity in rural areas and alleviate the
197 economic burden of supplying food to families while simultaneously ensuring
198 families have incentives to send their children to school.

199

200 Physical and psychological health concerns must be addressed to mitigate the long term
201 affects of Iraq's war torn history. Specific steps to be taken include:

202 1. The ESCWA promotes the improved access to micro-nutrient supplements.

203 Large portions of the Iraqi population particularly youth do not receive adequate
204 levels of vitamins and minerals. Introducing micro-nutrient supplements is an
205 inexpensive and easy way to meet the basic health needs of Iraqis.

206 2. Improving drug supply from outside nations for general lifesaving medications
207 for diseases prevalent in conflict zones. The ESCWA encourages all states to assist
208 in providing these essential medications at free or prorated levels.

209 3. Recommends the Establishment of community counseling groups to help
210 address the problem of psychological stress and trauma resulting from the various
211 conflicts in Iraq. This program will mitigate the psychological impact decades of

212 instability has created for individuals in Iraq, while concurrently establishing and
213 expanding social support networks.

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215 Investing in social and political empowerment within Iraq is also vital to the social
216 development of the region as a whole. Large portions of the population have begun to feel
217 disenfranchised and neglected by both society and government, and has depleted the
218 populations trust in the government to provide stability and security. In addressing this
219 problem, the ESCWA encourages the implementation of the following steps:

220 1. Encourages the delegating of more power to local government officials while
221 simultaneously ensuring fair elections. The majority of decisions in Iraq today are
222 made at the national level neglecting the perspective of local citizens. This has led
223 many citizens to not trust their local officials to do what is in their best interest.
224 With increased importance played on the fair election and appointment of these
225 officials, the state could entrust further power at the local level, reestablishing
226 trust between government and its citizenship.

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228 Additionally, great steps need to be taken to address the social development of
229 Iraqi refugee populations in neighboring states. Drawing from the developments
230 recommended above, the ESCWA would encourage the following initiatives towards
231 refugee populations from Iraq:

232 1. Ensure refugees receive basic living necessities, specifically clean water, safe
233 living areas, adequate food, education, and work opportunities.
234 2. Urges the facilitation of cultural practices in order to maintain the identity of
235 refugees. Supporting traditional cultural practices of all forms as well as ensuring
236 religious freedom of expression in its entirety.

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238 **C. IMMIGRATION AND POPULATION MOBILITY**

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240 The commission has combined the following positions on immigrant status for
241 Member States. Oman highlighted that immigration is not a pressing issue in their
242 country due to the fact they have a very small flow of immigration coming into and/or
243 leaving their country. The flow of immigration they do experience coming into their
244 country is mainly from Southeast Asia, and is a result of their proximity to India. The
245 delegation of the United Arab Emirates has stated they are currently working with
246 refugees and asylum seekers mostly originating from Iraq. They pointed out these
247 immigrants are skilled and are legally allowed to seek employment. Bahrain stressed their
248 dependence on immigration, currently 44% of their labor force is made up of migrant
249 workers.

250 The body discussed the possibility of creating a free movement region in which
251 citizens from ESCWA Member States would not be required to have visas to enter into or
252 leave Member States. The members looked into the European Union as a model to be
253 implemented in the ECSWA region. This suggestion was rejected by Kuwait and other
254 Gulf countries that recognized the risk they were running from having their countries
255 receive a huge inflow of immigrants that would put the oil industry at risk. However, the
256 issue of reducing trade barriers and of allowing free movement of capital within the
257 region was considered as a positive suggestion. This would bring countries in the region

258 together and create job opportunities in Arab countries that export immigrants to Gulf
259 Coast States.

260 The representative from Palestine highlighted that none of the Member States in the
261 ESCWA legally grant citizenship to Palestinian refugees. The honorable representative
262 stressed that 75% of Palestinians would like to eventually go back to Palestine but that
263 realistically they understand this is unlikely to happen in the short term due to current
264 circumstances. The representative stated that currently 40% of Palestinians are
265 unemployed skilled laborers. The honorable representative also encouraged states to
266 continue to implement programs similar to those in Jordan, where Palestinians are being
267 introduced into society and integrated into the economy where possible. The honorable
268 representative also encourages states to look at accepting policies similar to Lebanon,
269 where the government has granted citizenship to many Palestinian refugees on the basis
270 of religion.

271 Palestine proposed a few recommendations in dealing with Palestinians for the
272 ESCWA member countries to consider. The improvement of living condition at refugee
273 camps and continued and expanded help from state governments where needed. The
274 honorable representative seeks to protect the cultural practices and identity of Palestinians
275 in hopes to maintain the shared history and cultural practices of Palestinians.

276 Following the remarks made by the representative of Palestine, the members
277 raised several questions on whether the countries would have the capability to absorb
278 Palestinians, especially considering their extremely high rate of population growth.

279 Lebanon believes they have done enough to help Palestinian refugees and would
280 be strained in meeting further populations. Kuwait suggested the creation of an integrated
281 body that would deal with the issue in the region. The UAE raised the problem of getting
282 Palestinians out of Gaza in order to help them. The Syrian Arab Republic thought it was
283 important for countries to increase the documentation of Palestinians within the region so
284 then a more comprehensive approach can be carried out.

285 Immigration is a huge issue for Kuwait. The country heavily depends on foreign
286 workforce mainly in the private sector. More than 50% of the people currently in Kuwait
287 are not Kuwaiti nationals. The percentage is even higher considering non-nationals in the
288 workforce. As well as many other countries in the region, Kuwait is also facing the youth
289 bulge. An immediate solution for a country in which so many citizens are about to enter
290 the labor force is the implementation of policies that restrict immigration. Kuwait is
291 working to increase the cost of issuing visas, increasing the cost of sponsoring foreign
292 workers, and is establishing a quota system for employers to hire Kuwaiti nationals.
293 Kuwaiti nationals. Kuwait recognizes that these moves will have an effect in developing
294 countries in the ECSWA region since a lot of those countries depend on remittances from
295 immigrants in Gulf countries.

296 One problem Kuwait recognizes within its boundaries is the abuse foreign
297 workers may be subjected to, mainly those who work as domestic workers in Kuwaiti
298 homes. ESCWA Member States understand the numerous problems that are related to
299 human trafficking to Gulf countries. The withholding of passports restrict peoples
300 freedom of movement. Consequently, employees are left in a very vulnerable situation,
301 being subjected to such abuses, where it is nearly impossible to change employers.

302

303 **CHAPTER III.**

304 **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

305

306 On 23 November, 2010 the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia passed
307 the report on Population and Social Development by consensus.

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