

1997/12. Establishment of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the countries of the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Council,

Aware that the steadily growing trend towards the liberalization of foreign trade and economic globalization, the conclusion of a series of multilateral trade agreements within the framework of the World Trade Organization and the emergence of a large number of economic blocs will transform the international trading system in the future,

Conscious of the growing interest of the States members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in the World Trade Organization and the desire of many of them to join it and of the importance of defining the positions of the countries of the region and coordinating those positions with respect to the issues involved,

Taking into consideration the appreciation shown by member States for the efforts made by the secretariat of the Commission in this area, both alone and in cooperation with specialized international organizations,

Aware of the importance of defining the issues of concern to member States within the new areas that will be discussed in future trade negotiations, such as trade and environment, trade and investment and trade and competition, and the impact that those areas will have on the economic development of the countries of the region,

Welcoming the efforts made by numerous regional groups in conducting research and studies in those areas and coordinating their positions at the regional level,

1. *Establishes* the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the countries of the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which shall be made up of representatives of the States members of the Commission who specialize in this field and shall undertake the following tasks:

(a) Participation in the identification of the priorities and concerns of the States members of the Commission in the field of multilateral trade agreements and negotiations;

(b) Monitoring of international developments in world trade negotiations and the creation and development of economic and trade blocs and coordination of the positions of the States members of the Commission with respect thereto;

(c) Cooperation with the secretariat of the Commission in establishing programmes to assist the countries of the region in outlining appropriate national and regional economic development policies to enable those countries to take greater advantage of the trends towards liberalization of foreign trade and economic globalization;

(d) Establishment of joint programmes with the countries of the region and in cooperation with other regional and international organizations for training, exchange of information and studies;

2. *Decides* that the Committee shall hold its sessions annually, beginning in 1998;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia to follow up the implementation of the present resolution and report thereon to the Commission at its twentieth session.

*34th plenary meeting
18 July 1997*