

**Declaration Pan-Arab Free Trade Area Economic and Social Council's  
Resolution No. 1317-O.S. 59  
Dated February 19, 1997**

The Economic and Social Council, in its fifty ninth session held at the headquarters of the Arab League General Secretariat in Cairo, had adopted its Resolution No. 1317 Concerning the Declaration on the Establishment of a Pan-Arab Free Trade Area and approval of its Executive Program. Following is the text of the Resolution:

**Focus of Session's Work**

"Executive Program of the Agreement to Facilitate and Develop Inter-Arab Trade with a view to establishing a Pan-Arab Trade Area".

The Council took note of the report of the six-member Ministerial Committee entrusted with the task of considering the Executive Program for the establishment of a Pan-Arab Free Trade Area. Appreciating its efforts to complete its task of drafting an Executive Program to enforce the Agreement to Facilitate and Develop Inter-Arab Trade with a view to establishing a pan-Arab Free Trade Area that keeps pace with the conditions and needs of all Arab States,

consistent with the provisions of the World Trade Organization, preserves Arab States, economic interests, develops economic and trade relations among Arab States and between them and the outside world, and constitutes the first practical step towards the creation of an Arab economic bloc that will have a standing on the world economic arena;

The Council; having listened to the valuable presentation made by His Excellency engineer Ali Abu Al-Ragheb, Minister of Industry and Trade in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Chairman of the six-member Ministerial Committee;

The Statement by His Excellency the Secretary General of the League of Arab States on the dimensions of establishing an Arab Free Trade Area and the critical nature of the present historical juncture the Arab nation is going through;  
and

The clarifications presented by Mr. Abdel Rahman Al-Suheibani, the Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs in this respect;

And following deliberation;

**Hereby decides to:**

1. Declare the establishment of a Pan-Arab Free Trade Area over ten years as of January 1, 1998.
2. Approve the Executive Program for the establishment of the Pan-Arab Free Trade Area in its enclosed wording.

3. Commission the General Secretariat to take the appropriate measures and develop the work and functions of the General Department for Economic Affairs to suit the need to create the Pan-Arab Free Trade Area.
4. Call upon the committees assigned and provided for in the program to assume their tasks, work out their executive programs and timetables in order to achieve the goal of establishing the Pan-Arab Free Trade Area as scheduled, and submit their reports, as and when they are ready, to the Economic and Social Council.
5. Commission specialized Arab organizations, joint Arab financial institutions and Arab federations, each in its area of specialization, to monitor the implementation of this Resolution, and seek to develop their systems and functions to suit the need to achieve the goal of establishing the Pan-Arab Free Trade Area.
6. Commission the General Secretariat to arrange for a comprehensive study of the existing free trade areas in the Arab States and submit it to the Economic and Social Council before the end of 1998 to decide on how to treat their products within the framework of the Executive Program.
7. Call upon the six-member Ministerial Committee to continue its work during the initial phases of implementation of the Executive Program in order to address any obstacles that may hinder its implementation, while deciding to add the Republic of Tunisia to the Committee's membership.
8. Have the implementation of the resolution to establish the pan-Arab Free Trade Area as the focus of the council's work during its coming sessions, until its establishment is completed "resolution No. 1317- O.S.59 L-2- February 9, 1997

reference: [www.arableagueonline.org](http://www.arableagueonline.org)