Press Release

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in association with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty and the Lebanese Economic Association, to Host Expert Group Meeting on Policies for Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention in Western Asia, 9-10 December 2009, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Beirut.

Beirut, Lebanon, 8 December 2009 — The Section for Emerging and Conflict Related Issues (ECRI) of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), which is dedicated to addressing development challenges as a result of conflict, is hosting an Expert Group Meeting on Policies for Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention in Western Asia, in association with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty and the Lebanese Economic Association, on 9-10 December 2009, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Beirut.

The meeting will gather prominent experts from think tanks, academic institutions, United Nations agencies and other multilateral organizations, as well as decision-makers and civil society representatives. The main objective is to examine and recommend policies which are geared towards preventing conflict and building long term sustainable peace in this region. As a matter of fact, countries suffering from conflict or political tension are very much dependent on successful peacebuilding interventions that would be geared towards preventing a relapse into conflict and ensuring sustainable peace and development. Key ingredients for effective interventions in the aftermath of conflict include the provision of basic safety and security, an inclusive political process, the provision of essential services, restoration of core government functions and economic revitalization. These priority areas span across development, peace and security and human rights, reflecting the interlinked and mutually reinforcing nature of these issues, as repeatedly emphasized by Member States, including in the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

The meeting will begin with a session addressing the root causes and spillover effects of conflict and instability in Western Asia through discussing the issue of Arab human insecurity as a root cause of conflict. Among other root causes of conflict, the meeting will tackle development challenges created by the spillover effects of conflict and instability.

Experts are expected to focus on the priorities for economic policies which are tailored to prevent conflict. Deliberations will examine economic policies which undermine peacebuilding efforts and those policies which are effective in spite of unstable environments. There will also be a session dedicated to investigate social grievances as a root cause of conflict, debating on the possibilities of reversing existing negative trends in order to build peace. The issues of civil strife, social inequalities, as well as the social challenges resulting from conflict will be scrutinized alongside potential mitigating measures. Experts will also tackle the importance of the public sector applying good governance practices as a conduit for peacebuilding and conflict prevention. This includes effective means to achieve equal access to essential public services, a critical factor placing the public sector as a leader in local peacebuilding efforts. The Expert Group Meeting will conclude with an in-depth discussion on recommendations and the way forward on effective policies for peacebuilding and conflict prevention in Western Asia.