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ILO



ITU

Expert Group Meeting on the LAS-UN Joint Report on the attainment of MDGs in the Arab Region, 2010, 9-11 December 2009, Bristol Hotel, Beirut, Lebanon.

INFORMATION NOTE

A. Introduction

After more than half of the period until the 2015 deadline to achieve the Millennium Development Goals has passed as stated by the UN General Assembly in 2000, the progress made toward Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, Achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development is still slow due to many factors that expanded widely because of the recent global economical, financial and food crises. That made the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 difficult and unobtainable.

The MDGs-related activities held at ESCWA, the convener of the LAS-UN Thematic Working Group (TWG)¹ on the attainment of MDGs in the Arab Region (TWG on Arab MDGs), represent an opportunity (ies) to discuss and follow-up on the efforts and work done by the members of the TWG on Arab MDGs and concerned parties in the Arab countries toward the achievement of MDGs by 2015.

In this regard, ESCWA organized the 1st meeting of the TWG on Arab MDGs on 23 July 2009 at the UN House, Beirut, to discuss the occurring global issues and crisis and their impacts on the attainment of MDGs in the region. The meeting also discussed the preparation for the forthcoming report on Arab MDGs 2010.

¹ The Thematic Working Group (TWG) on the Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region MDGs was established pursuant to the decisions of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) taken at its 12th meeting held in Beirut on 13-14 September 2008. The 12th RCM agreed on “the establishment of three proposed thematic working groups (TWGs), subsidiary to RCM, focusing on **MDGs in the Arab region**, climate change, and food security, respectively.”

The meeting was attended by representatives of 10 United Nations regional offices (UNDP, UNFPA, joint programmes on HIV/AIDS, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, ILO, UNESCO, WHO, ITU, United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the League of Arab States (LAS).

The meeting mainly focused on the continued cooperation and coordination between ESCWA and the UN agencies members of the TWG as well as LAS to produce a high quality, analysis-based, coherent and consistent flagship publication entitled “LAS-UN Joint Regional Report on the attainment of the MDGs in the Arab Region, 2010” (the Arab MDGs Report). The meeting also agreed on the main theme of the report to be “the impacts of and responses to the International Financial Crisis (IFC) in the Arab region”. The participants discussed the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) and the draft Action Plan of the TWG, and the preparation for this expert group meeting (EGM) on the Arab MDGs Report. The most important points of agreement of the 1st meeting of the TWG on Arab MDGs were as follows:

1. The membership of the TWG on Arab MDGs represented by ten participating UN agencies (10 UN agencies who attended the meeting)².
2. The nomination of the lead and the contributing agencies for each of the eight goals (and targets) of the MDGs that will be covered in the Arab MDGs Report 2010.
3. The main theme of the LAS-UN Joint Regional Report on the attainment of the MDGs in the Arab Region 2010 will be “the impacts of and responses to the International Financial Crisis (IFC) in the Arab region”.
4. The drafting group of the Arab MDGs Report 2010 will be composed of five agencies. These are ESCWA (Chair), UNDP, LAS, UNICEF and UNFPA³.
5. An Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on the production of the Arab MDGs Report 2010 will be organized by ESCWA in collaboration with all members of the TWG. The EGM will be held on 9-11 December 2009 at the UN House, Beirut, Lebanon.
6. The lead agencies for the eight MDGs as agreed upon in the Action Plan will submit the 8 draft chapters (chapters 3-10) of the Arab MDGs Report by the first week of November 2009 so that ESCWA can send them to the Arab countries for their review and comments sufficiently ahead of the EGM to be held on 9-11 December 2009.
7. The drafting group as agreed upon in the Action Plan will submit the 3 draft chapters (chapter 1: Introduction, chapter 2: The attainment of MDGs in the Arab region within the context of the international financial and economic crisis, and chapter 11: Summary of conclusions and recommendations) of the Arab MDGs Report by the first week of

² The TWG on Arab MDGS members are: UNICEF (Ms. Hasmik Egian, Regional Chief of Programmes and Planning), WHO EMRO (Mr. Mohamed Ali, Regional Adviser, Health Information System), ITU (Ms. Deena Assaf, Regional Programme Director), Nefertiti Mohamed Ali, Senior Advisor), UNESCO (Mr. Bechir Lamine, Senior Programme Specialist in Higher Education), UNIFEM (Ms. Enshrah Ahmed, Deputy Regional Director), UNDP (Mr. Khalid Fouad Abu-Ismaïl, Poverty and Macroeconomics Adviser), UNAIDS (Mr. Hamidreza Setayesh, Regional Programme Adviser), ILO (Ms. Shaza Ghaleb Al-Jondi, UN-Reform Programme Analyst), UNFPA (Mr. Abdallah Abdelaziz Zoubi, Population & Development Regional Advisor), ESCWA (Mr. Nabil Safwat, Chief, Economic Development and Globalization Division, and Convener of TWG).

³ The members of the drafting group: UNICEF (Ms. Hasmik Egian, Regional Chief of Programmes and Planning), UNDP (Mr. Khalid Fouad Abu-Ismaïl, Poverty and Macroeconomics Adviser), UNFPA (Mr. Abdallah Abdelaziz Zoubi, Population & Development Regional Advisor), LAS (Mr. Ibrahim Gaafar El-Souri, Director, Development and Social Policies Department), ESCWA (Mr. Nabil Safwat, Chief, Economic Development and Globalization Division, and Chair of Drafting Group).

November 2009 so that ESCWA can send them to the Arab countries for their review and comments sufficiently ahead of the EGM to be held on 9-11 December 2009.

8. The lead agencies and the drafting group will present their respective draft chapters to the experts and representatives of Arab countries at the EGM on 9-11 December 2009. The main objective is to seek the endorsement and/or comments of the member countries and the resource experts on the contents of the different chapters of the report.
9. By 31 December 2009, the lead agencies and the drafting group will prepare the 2nd draft of the relevant chapters of the report based on the discussion, comments, and conclusions at the EGM (9-11 December 2009).
10. By mid February 2010, the drafting group will submit the 1st consolidated draft of the Arab MDGs Report to Arab countries, members of TWG on Arab MDGs, relevant experts, ESCWA task force on the MDGs report, to seek their comments and views.
11. Two weeks from receiving the 1st draft of the report in February 2010, the TWG on Arab MDGs will review and approve the 1st draft of the report.
12. By end of March 2010, the drafting group should prepare and send the revised draft of the Arab MDGs report to Arab countries, members of TWG on Arab MDGs, relevant experts, ESCWA task force on the MDGs report, to seek their comments and views.
13. By April 2010, the drafting group will produce the final draft report.
14. By April 2010, the final draft of the report will be circulated to all members of the TWG on Arab MDGs for their review and comments (within one month of receiving it from the drafting group).
15. The drafting group will produce the final report (in both languages) by May 2010.
16. The participating UN agencies and LAS expressed their commitment to contribute to the budget of the TWG⁴.

B. Major themes of the meeting

Based on the above decisions, the EGM will mainly tackle the following issues:

- 1- Review and discuss the first draft of the 8 draft chapters (chapters' # 3-10) of the Arab MDGs Report prepared by the lead agencies and sent by ESCWA to expert and concerned bodies in the Arab countries to seek the endorsement and/or comments by the second half of November 2009.
- 2- Review and discuss the first draft of the 3 draft chapters (chapters # 1: Introduction, 2: The attainment of MDGs in the Arab region within the context of the international financial and economic crisis and 11: Summary of conclusions and recommendations) of the Arab MDGs

⁴ The financial contribution till 20 October 2009:

\$ US 10,000: by UNICEF received by ESCWA on 29 September 2009.

\$ US 10,000: by UNDP

\$ US 15,000: by UNFPA

\$ US 100,000: by ESCWA

Report, prepared by the drafting group and sent by ESCWA to the Arab countries for their review and comments sufficiently the second half of November 2009.

- 3- Interaction and exchange of expertise among participants in order to better comprehend the challenges against the attainment of the MDGs especially after the current economic and financial crises and the way forward.

Therefore, participating Arab countries are expected to present a written paper reflecting their comments and endorsements on the first draft chapters basically the ones containing data and information about their respective countries. A short report on the progress made toward the attainment of MDGs in those countries within the impacts of the international economic and financial crisis is also requested.

C. Participants

Because of the diversity of MDGs related issues, concerned parties in the Arab countries are advised to compose delegations of experts in different MDGs related fields, in addition to economic and financial experts. The Meeting will also be attended by the members of the TWG on Arab MDGs, the members of the drafting group and members of ESCWA task force on the MDGs report. The meeting will also invite a few selected experts.

D. The provisional agenda

The provisional agenda will be sent to participants as soon as possible.

E. Outcome

The Meeting will be an occasion for expertise interchange among participants for better understanding of the challenges and obstacles facing the achievement of the MDGs within the context of the current international economic and financial crisis and the way to respond to it. The meeting will also identify the stages/activities taken to prepare the joint LAS-UN report on Arab MDGs 2010. A thorough discussion of the first draft of the report will take place.

F. Language

Contributions will be in Arabic and English. Simultaneous translation from and to the two languages will be provided during the sessions.

G. Date and venue

The EGM will be held at the Bristol Hotel, in Beirut, from 9 to 11 December 2009. Registration will begin at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, 9 December 2009, and the inaugural meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. on the same day. The meeting will conclude in the afternoon of Friday, 11 December 2009.

H. Accommodation and transportation

In order to facilitate the movement and transportation to the meeting of participants, ESCWA suggests that participants should make reservations at the Bristol Hotel in Beirut, where the following discounts are offered: \$70 per day for a single room, to which 10 per cent VAT should be added. This price includes breakfast. For reservation, please contact the hotel directly:

Tel.: 00961-1-351400
Fax: 00961-1-351409
E-mail: lebristol@lebristol-hotel.com

In order to ensure that you receive the ESCWA discount, please mention at the time of reservation that you will be attending the ESCWA Expert Group Meeting on the Arab MDGs.

I. Entry visas

Participants may obtain entry visas from the Lebanese embassy in their own countries. If necessary, ESCWA can assist in obtaining visas. If such assistance is required, please supply ESCWA with a copy of your passport, including the relevant information, by 15 November 2009.

J. Correspondence

All EGM-related correspondence should be directed to:

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