



Information Note

Expert Group Meeting on "Inclusive Social Development in the Arab Region" Beirut, 4-5 November 2014

1- Background:

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is organizing an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Inclusive Social Development in the Arab Region. The meeting will be held at the UN House, in Beirut, during 4-5 November 2014.

The EGM will review the contents, concepts and information embodied in an upcoming ESCWA report (Report) covering several broad areas of the inclusive social development agenda. The report addresses various aspects of the challenges of social exclusion, marginalization, inequality, equity, and poverty alleviation currently facing the region. The EGM will also contribute to ESCWA's current work on regional social development priorities geared towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are set to form the basis for the post 2015 United Nations development agenda. It will address existing policies and experiences on social inclusion in the region, and identify some of the major development gaps, focusing on the right to development and the areas in need of government attention.

2- Themes and agenda of the meeting:

The agenda of the meeting covers the main inclusive social development issues in the Arab region, as presented in the draft ESCWA report on inclusive social development which will be discussed during the meeting. The discussion of the report is also designed to obtain first hand information on best practices on social inclusion in countries of the region and elsewhere. Presentations of country experiences and best practices will address the following key issues:

- Challenges to provide decent work opportunities and effective policies implemented in selected member countries;
- Policies and programmes to expand the social security and protection umbrella to include key vulnerable groups;
- Measures and policies adopted to ensure access to quality education, information and health care services to all;
- Social policies and programmes to ensure access to land and decent housing;
- Social and cultural means to ensure social cohesion and curb social exclusion and marginalization;
- The way forward: Towards a social inclusion agenda in the Arab region.

Participants from member countries who wish to present a paper on their respective country experiences are to inform ESCWA secretariat before October 10, 2014 at the latest, and provide a copy of their presentation/paper before October 24, 2014.

The EGM agenda will also address the social pillar of the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 UN Development Agenda and the role of ESCWA in identifying regional social development priorities.

The EGM will also shed light on how other key regional and international organizations are addressing the social pillar of the SDGs and the post-2015 UN development agenda.

3- Time and Place:

The EGM will be held at ESCWA headquarters (the UN House) in Riad Al Solh Square, Downtown Beirut. It will commence at 9:30 on Tuesday 4 November 2014, with an opening session followed by plenary sessions and a closing session at the end of the second day on 5 November 2014, as it will be detailed in the agenda of the meeting.

Participants can access the building through Gibran Khalil Gibran Garden reaching Pedestrian Gate 2 at the North-West corner of the building (Please see Annex I for a self explanatory map) Participants will undergo security screening procedures and will then proceed to the ID office, adjacent to the gate, where they will collect their temporary IDs to access the building.



4- Participation and Registration:

Participants to the meeting will comprise inclusive social development delegates from member countries, representatives of regional and international organizations and other experts.

Participants bear their own travel and accommodation expenses, unless otherwise informed.

Participants are to confirm their participation and electronic registration to facilitate their access to the meeting before 15 October 2014. Participant electronic registration can be made at below electronic link:

http://participant.escwa.org.lb/MeetingsReg.aspx?_M=0aDnLKE16wg=&_N=N&_O=N

5- Visas:

Participants are reminded to obtain the necessary visas for their own travel, from the Lebanese embassy or consulate in their respective country. A copy of the invitation letter to the meeting could be submitted to facilitate their granting of visa. This should be done as soon as possible to avoid possible delays.

6- Transportation and accommodation:

The Beirut – Rafic Hariri International Airport is approximately 15 minutes by car from downtown Beirut where the UN House/UN ESCWA and several hotels, restaurants and shopping areas are located. Airport taxis are readily available upon exiting the terminal building. A one-way trip from the airport to the hotel should cost below \$30.

Participants are requested to make their own hotel reservations. Below are some suggestions of hotels that are relatively close to downtown Beirut, with applicable UN rates. When making your booking, please make sure to indicate that you are attending the Meeting at ESCWA to ensure that you get the UN rate.

Hotel Name & Address	Room Type	Low Season	High Season
MARKAZIEH MONROE SUITES	Junior Suite rate:	\$110.00	\$200.00
Contact: Mr. Walid Abi Merched	One Bed Room Suite	\$170.00	\$265.00
Markazieh Building, Downtown Beirut, Close to ESCWA	Breakfast	Included	
	Service Charges (16%):	Included	
Tel: 961-1-991200, Fax: 961-1-991209, Mobile: 961 3 928544	Government tax (VAT 10%)	Not included	
E-mail: walid.merched@markaziamonroesuites.com	Airport pick up/ drop off	Not included	
RAMADA HOTEL	Single room rate:	\$90.00	
Contact: Ms. Sara Reslan	Double room rate:	\$100.00	
Minet El Hosn - Chateaubriand Street, Downtown Beirut	Breakfast	Included	
	Service Charges (16%):	Included	
Tel: 961-1-990299, Fax: 961-1-990399, Mobile: 961-3-758452	Government tax (VAT 10%)	Not included	
E-mail: sreslan@ramadalebanon.com	Airport pick up/ drop off	Not included	
RIVIERA HOTEL	Single room rate:	\$90.00	\$90.00
Contact: Mr. Alain Awad	Double room rate:	\$105.00	\$105.00
Manara – Beirut	Breakfast	Included	
	Service Charges (16%):	Included	
Tel: 00961-1-373210, Fax: 00961-1-365239	Government tax (VAT 10%)	Not included	
E-mail: alainawad@rivierahotel.com.lb	Airport pick up/ drop off	Not included	
Orient Queen Homes	Single room rate:	\$95.00	\$110.00
Contact: Ms. Pilar Eid	Double room rate:	\$95.00	\$120.00
John Kennedy Str. - Ras Beirut	Breakfast	Included	
	Service Charges (16%):	Included	
Tel: 00961-1-361140, Fax: 00961-1-361141	Government tax (VAT 10%)	Not included	
E-mail: mirna.sadek@orientqueenhomes.com	Airport pick up/ drop off	Not included	
GEFINOR ROTANA 5*****	Single room rate:	\$115.00	\$200.00
Contact: Mr. Julien Khatib	Double room rate:	\$135.00	\$220.00
Hamra, Clemenceau Street	Breakfast	Included	
	Service Charges (16%):	Included	
Tel: 961-1-371888, Fax: 961-1-372999, Mobile: 961-70-982694	Government tax (VAT 10%)	Not included	
E-mail: julien.khatib@rotana.com	Airport Pick up/Drop off	Not included	

7- Currency:

The currency in Lebanon is the Lebanese Pound (LBP). The US dollar is also widely used in the country. The exchange rate is approximately \$1 = LBP 1,500.

Language of the meeting:

The languages of the meeting are English and Arabic. Simultaneous interpretation will be available.

8- Additional Information:

For substantive issues, kindly contact Ms. Naela Haddad, and for participation and logistics, Ms. Salwa Mohamed. The contact details are as follows:

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Pedestrian Entry/Exit Procedures for visitors to the United Nations House

