Since their adoption in 2000, gender experts criticized the MDG for their failure to adequately include a gender component in their goals, targets and indicators. In addition to reducing gender equality to one goal, the target of goal 3 on promoting gender equality and empowering women, is limited to eliminating gender disparity in primary education, preferably by 2005, and all levels of education by 2015. That target ignores the fact that gender equality can only be attained if women are empowered in all economical, social and political spheres of life. In Arab countries where gender equality has almost been attained in enrolment levels, women’s advancement in education is not matched with higher and adequate representation in the labor force and political representation, which suggests that gender parity in education, will not necessarily translate into economic and political empowerment for women.

Only a holistic approach can lead to the eradication of gender imbalances and contribute to the alleviation of poverty and attainment of the other MDGs. Gender equality and the empowerment of women are at the core of all the MDGs, from improving health and fighting disease to reducing poverty and mitigating hunger, expanding education and lowering child mortality, increasing access to safe water, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

In addition to the fact that not all data for MDG indicators are disaggregated by sex, the indicators used to monitor progress towards the attainment of Goal 3, to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, are themselves not gender sensitive. For instance, indicator 9, which refers to the share of women in waged employment in the non-agricultural sector, completely ignores the fact that most women’s work lies in the informal and agricultural sector especially in poor countries. Moreover, indicator 12, concerning political participation, limited to the representation of women in national parliaments, ignores women’s role in promoting good governance, and women’s political participation at the grassroots level.

The MDGs have additionally failed to link the eight goals to other International instruments, mechanisms, and processes such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights (ICESCR). It is necessary to adopt a right-based approach in MDG, reporting and implementation by referring to the minimum standards found in the above mentioned International Instruments.

In addition to adopting a right-based approach in MDG reporting and implementation; there is an urgent need to conduct a gender analysis of the causes, manifestations and consequences of gender inequality, and to engender MDGs implementation, monitoring and reporting mechanisms and processes; because it is largely women who, because of cultural, structural and legal barriers, are denied access to productive assets and resources.
B. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the meeting is to discuss best methods and practices in integrating a gender perspective as well as a right-based approach in MDG reporting and implementation. The meeting will also review success stories in MDG reporting from selected ESCWA member countries. Furthermore, during the meeting, the experts will review and provide comments on an ESCWA draft study entitled “Progress in Achievement of MDGs in ESCWA member states: a gender lens. The meeting will conclude with recommendations on how to improve MDG reporting and implementation.

C. FORMAT AND CONTENT

The two-day meeting will consist of five sessions. During the first session, experts will discuss the goal by goal approach in integrating a gender perspective in MDG reporting and implementation. The second session will be presented by OHCHR and will explore best methods for adopting a right-based approach in MDG reporting and implementation by referring to International human rights conventions and standards. The third session, which will be presented by UNDP, will display success stories in MDG reporting in selected ESCWA countries. The second day which is made of two sessions will review and discuss the draft report entitled “Progress in Achievement of the MDGs in ESCWA region: a Gender Lens” (English) that could be accessed on the following link:


D. PARTICIPANTS

It is expected that one expert or staff member from the national machineries for women from each of the following ESCWA member states will attend the meeting: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

E. DATE AND VENUE

The meeting will be held on the 25th and 26th of January 2011, at the UN House in Beirut, Lebanon.

F. LANGUAGE

The meeting will be held in English.

G. ENTRY VISAS TO LEBANON

Participants may obtain entry visas through the Lebanese Embassy in their respective countries. If for any reason, such as non-existence of a Lebanese Embassy, entry visa in not possible to obtain, ESCWA may assist in issuing a visa. In that event, a colored copy of the passport should be scanned and sent to Ms. Carla Moussa by email moussal@un.org no later than 10 January 2011:

H. TRAVEL, ACCOMMODATION AND TRANSPORTATION

1-TRAVEL

UN-ESCWA will purchase the tickets for the participants according to the applicable UN rules and regulations, whereby the most direct and economical route will be chosen, and an electronic ticket will be
sent to the participants. Participants are kindly reminded not to buy their own ticket, as they cannot be refunded.

2-ACCOMODATION
ESCWA advises participants to make reservations with a hotel in Beirut. Special arrangements were made by ESCWA to obtain reduced rates (a comprehensive list of most hotels in Beirut can be found at the meeting page). Participants are kindly requested to contact directly the reservation service at the selected hotel and mention that they participate in an UNESCWA meeting in order to obtain the reduced rates. Participants must settle hotel accommodation and other expenses directly with the hotel before departure.

3- TRANSPORTATION
Participants are kindly requested to make their own arrangements for transportation to and from the airport, noting that this cost will be refunded.

As per UN Rules and Regulations, participants will receive a daily subsistence allowance at the applicable UN rate for Beirut to cover the accommodation, meals as well as transportation for the duration of the meeting.

Participants are requested to present their original boarding pass (for participants traveling by air) and passport to Ms. Carla Moussa upon registration the first day of the meeting. Failure to do so will result in participants not receiving their entitlements on time. Entitlements will be distributed the second day of the workshop.

I. COMMUNICATIONS
Please address all workshop-related communications to:

Ms. Afaf Omer
Chief, Centre for Women
ESCWA
Mobile: 961-71-181585
Fax: 961-1-981510
E-mail: omer1@un.org

Ms. Rania Al Jazairi
Social Affairs Officer
ESCWA
Mobile: 961-3-815158
Fax: 961-1-981510
E-mail: al-jazairi@un.org

Ms. Carla Moussa
Research Assistant
ESCWA
Mobile: 961-3-735257
Fax: 961-1-981510
E-mail: moussa1@un.org