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ESCWA Workshop on Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators and Observatories



ESCWA organized the follow-up Workshop on Science, Technology and Innovation Observatories in ESCWA Member Countries: “Phase II - Capacity Building on STI Indicators and Observatories,” in Beirut on 18-20 January 2010. The workshop concluded with recommendations on further enhancing the role and partnerships of STIs in the region.

The first-phase workshop was held in November 2009

and targeted decision makers. It aimed at establishing national and regional STI observatories in the ESCWA region. Both phases are part of a series of activities and efforts to establish the ESCWA Regional Technology Centre.

The workshop included training on STI observatories and indicators and relevant case studies, covering the following topics: STI role in development and policymaking;

production of STI statistics; models for setting-up STI observatories; and regional cooperation and capacity building in the field of STI. It was attended by 20 participants from Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Sudan, Syria and Tunisia.

Participants included public sector specialists and both regional and international technology experts involved in the creation and implementation of STI observatories and the development of STI indicators. The workshop’s commendations included calls for raising awareness on STI observatories in the region and devising a work plan with institutions involved in creating national STI observatories. They also urged building capacities for national STI observatories and provid-

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ing required resources as well as identifying STI indicators applicable for the region and conducting training on their use. Promoting the identification of lead agencies for the national STI observatories and launching a website for STI observatories for knowledge sharing among national observatories and partner institutions were also recommended. The workshop finally called for enabling access to STI databases and repositories and for collaborating with universities on technology research and transfer. ■

Workshop on Civil Society e-Services’ Delivery

ESCWA is conducting an online discussion forum on the delivery of e-Services in Civil Society, as the second part of a project dedicated to this topic. The forum is currently hosted at the Information Society Portal for the ESCWA Region (ISPER) and may be accessed at URL: <http://isper.escwa.org.lb/>. It comes as a complement to the work undertaken in the eponym workshop that ESCWA hosted earlier.



Workshop on Civil Society e-Services' Delivery (Cont.)

The workshop was held at the UN House in Beirut to increase the awareness and capacities of NGOs in the ESCWA region in order for them to develop and use e-commerce services. It provided participating NGOs with a platform to share knowledge, experiences and best practices for applying ICTs and delivering e-commerce services.

Discussions that took place acknowledged the effect that e-commerce has on reducing costs, increasing revenues and improving efficiencies. Participants emphasized the importance of online presence, which facilitates knowledge collection and dissemination, provides partnerships and networking opportunities with other organizations, attracts donors and funds, and extends the outreach and cyber presence of NGOs. NGOs with limited resources and technical IT skills were advised to join already existing online marketplaces that provide secure e-commerce services. The workshop was attended by 21 participants from seven ESCWA member countries in addition to one expert from Turkey currently working in Ireland.



The work that ESCWA is doing in this area stems from a realization of the importance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) applications in building the information society in the ESCWA region. It is also inspired by the Commission's belief that NGOs are a major player in building the information society. Their diversity, hands-on approach and interface with local communities make them key players in ensuring equitable and affordable access to ICT applications and e-services for disadvantaged segments of the society. The significance of ICT applications and e-services has been recognised by many NGOs in the region. However, the level of awareness, adoption and actual delivery of e-services varies significantly from one member country to another and even within a given member country. ■

ESCWA Facts & Figures

Environment and Economy

As the figure below shows, and given that the environment is used from both ends in any economy, it follows that environment should be factored into national accounting. The environment includes "the provision of natural resources to production and consumption activities, waste absorption by environmental media and environmental services of life support and other human amenities." Furthermore, "new scarcities of natural resources now threaten the sustained productivity of the economy, and economic production and consumption activities may impair environmental quality by overloading natural sinks with wastes and pollutants. By not accounting for the private and social costs of the use of natural resources and degradation of the environment, conventional accounts may send the wrong signals."

This link between the environment and economy was brought to light by the

Brundtland Report. Sustainable development was defined as a concept aimed at balancing the three pillars of economic and social development with environmental protection, which involves a "strong element of intergenerational ethics." Moreover, and as highlighted in chapter eight of Agenda 21 of the 1992 Earth Summit, integrating environment and development in decision-making is at the basis of achieving sustainable development.

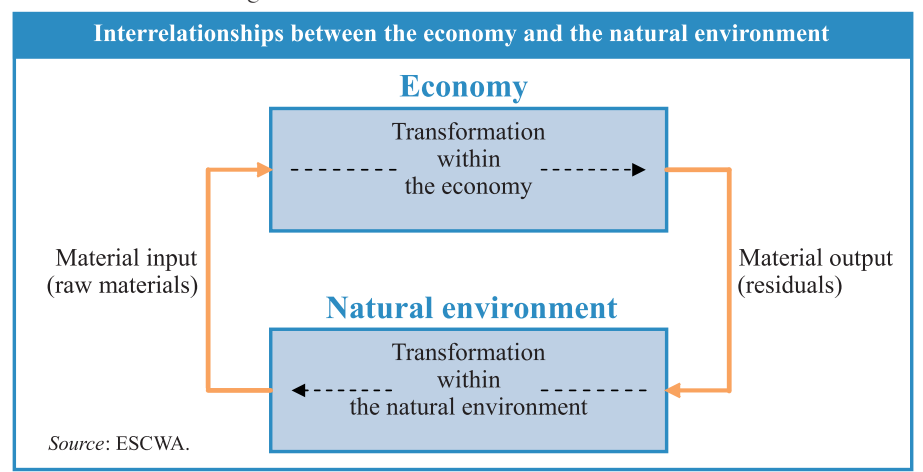
Extract from framework for environmental economic accounting in the ESCWA region, ESCWA, 2009. Works cited in the extract are the following:

1-Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Integrated environmental and economic accounting: an operational manual, No. 78 (2000), p. 3.

2-United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), "Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development", which is equally referred to as the Brundtland Report (March 1987).

3- G.P. Hammond and A.B. Winnett, "Interdisciplinary perspectives on environmental appraisal and valuation techniques", vol. 159, No. 3 (August 2006), p. 118.

4- DESA, Agenda 21: Earth Summit –The United Nations Programme of Action from Rio (Division for SustainableDevelopment, 1993). ■



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