



The Phoenix



UN-ESCWA launched the new Phoenix, a confirmation of its will to build hope in a better tomorrow for Lebanon and the region. This bird is the second mobile E-Caravan, which bore "The Phoenix" for a name, after its predecessor was dealt a lethal blow in the July 2006 war. Executive Secretary, Bader Omar AlDafa, stressed the commitment of UN-ESCWA to pursue with its developmental projects in Lebanon, despite the hardship the region is going through, asserting that the determination of our peoples remains the driving force behind the effective contribution to development efforts and the hope to build a better and stable future, and saying that the link between development and peace is one of the most important concepts that form the basis of UN activities, and one of the main goals the organization seeks to achieve.

AlDafa was speaking at the launch of the new E-Caravan-Phoenix project for South

Lebanon, during a press conference under the auspices of Lebanese Minister of Culture, Tarek Mitri, represented by the Ministry's Director General, Omar Halablal on Wednesday 9 April 2008 in the Grand Serail. The project is implemented by "Fondation Saradar" in partnership with the Italian Cooperation for Development, Ross Program - Embassy of Italy, the UN-ESCWA, and the Canada Fund for local initiatives- Embassy of Canada.

Development as a Path to Peace

AlDafa considered the "Phoenix" project as the expression of the will to pursue support for development activities amidst the difficult times and challenges that both Lebanon and the whole region are facing. He added that it was the destiny of Lebanon and its life-loving people to overcome crisis and strive for a future full of peace, development and stability. He also said that UN-

ESCWA draws its determination to pursue its efforts from the spirit of resolve its partners and the peoples of the region have. He asserted development should be a pillar for community stability and cohesion, especially that improving economic and social conditions and raising living standards in countries of the region helps to alleviate prejudice and consolidate peace and stability.

UN-ESCWA and its partners had launched the first E-Caravan in January 2006. The Caravan had begun operation in Naqoura before reaching Ayta Al Shaab, where it was destroyed during the July 2006 war while it was parked in the Ayta Al Shaab Public School. The second E-Caravan will head to its first



The E-Caravan is a fully equipped mobile computer school that travels to clusters of villages to introduce the world of Information Technology (IT) to the communities of South Lebanon. It targets local communities faced with great challenges and obstacles, which hinder their development. It aims at creating new opportunities through ICT, with a view to improve the economic and social status of these communities by creating new job opportunities and establishing income-generating projects.

IN THIS ISSUE

The Phoenix

Technology for Development

The Committee

Correction

Technology for Development

UN-ESCWA Executive Secretary, Bader Omar AlDafa said that technology, and namely Information and Communication Technology (ICT), is among one of the five main priorities of UN-ESCWA work, given its growing impact on the development process and its direct role in increasing growth rates. He added that economic and social development in developing countries will not be achieved within coming decades without technology transfer and implementation.

AlDafa was speaking at the opening of the fourth UN-ESCWA Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation (ESTIC), held in cooperation with the Bahraini Foreign Ministry on 1-2 April 2008 in Crowne Plaza Hotel, Manama.

Highlights of the meeting discussions included developing the information society in Western Asia, establishing the UN-ESCWA Technology Center. Par-



Technology for Development (Cont.)



Participants also discussed the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Western Asia, Science and Technology for Development, the achievements of the UN-ESCWA Information and Communication Technology Division (ICTD) in 2006-2007, the work programme for 2008-2009, and the strategic framework for 2010-2011.

The Road to Development

AlDafa considered that modern technologies offer unprecedented solutions to economic and social development by way of building the information and knowledge society, inducing radical changes in methods and mechanisms of work in many fields such as trade, industry, agriculture, education and health, and increasing job opportunities. He saw that if the common concept for globalization is the flow of goods, services and capital according to liberalized policies, then the flow of ideas and knowl-

edge, and technology transfer have become an integral part of the concept of globalization, one that works on building productivity, driving competitive capacities forth and encouraging export.

AlDafa said that the work of the ESTIC has resulted in valuable directives, which led to designing and implementing a program concerning the use of technology to combat poverty and unemployment. Major activities in this context include the Smart Community Projects, implemented in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, and consisting of a Multi-purpose Technology Community Centre, and an Agro food Unit that assist local communities in creating employment opportunities, and a source of income to the society. He added that the work of ESTIC is especially important in the UN-ESCWA region, whose economies are in need to head towards a knowledge-based economy now more than ever before. Current indicators of knowledge-based economies in this area are

less than the bottom half of global average. These countries also need to develop the information society and bridge the digital gap, both locally and regionally. ■

The Committee

The Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation (ESTIC) is formed of distinguished experts in science, technology and innovation from UN-ESCWA member countries. The Committee was established in 2001, pursuant to Resolution 225 that UN-ESCWA adopted during its 21st ministerial session (May 2001). The Committee meets at least once every two years since 2002. Its main duties are the following: advising on member country endeavors to acquire modern technology including the need for support, with particular reference to information and communications technology (ICT), biotechnology and new materials technology; proposing ways to promote regional cooperation for the transfer, adaptation and mastery of technology; advising on priorities related to UN-ESCWA work programmes in the fields of developing scientific and technological capabilities and technological innovation; and following-up on international and regional resolutions relating to science, technology and innovation and their implementation in member countries. ■

The Phoenix (Cont.)

stop in Deir Qanoun Al Nahr village, to begin operation on 12 April 2008. Two additional E-Caravans are expected to be launched later, to cover the North and the Bekaa, especially remote villages.



Informatics for All

The meeting was also attended by the President and the Director General "Fondation Saradar" Mrs. Marie-Claude Saradar and Ms. Tania Helou, the First Secretary of the Italian Embassy in Lebanon, Daniela Tonon, representing Ambassador Gabriele Checchia, the Canadian Ambassador to Lebanon Mr. Louis de Lorimier, and the Governor of South Lebanon Mr. Malek Abdel Khaleq. A quorum of diplomatic and media figures and a number of representatives of UN agencies in Lebanon are also invited to attend the event, in addition to figures from the private and public sectors and regional and international organizations.

Participants recalled in their speeches the legend of the Phoenix, the bird that dies only to revive from its ashes, especially that it is especially symbolic in the history of Lebanon, which has long suffered from wars and is currently in the grips of turmoil. They also said that launching the mobile E-Caravan comes as part of a mission to introduce informatics to all, and open the doors of the future to everyone. Such knowledge takes on a special importance, a fact that is underlined by the number of people who desire to learn these new techniques. ■

CORRECTION

The previous Weekly News issue (dated 31 March-6 April) highlighted the workshop UN-ESCWA held on the Design of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics: Mainstreaming Gender in Sectoral Statistics in Istanbul from 24 to 26 March 2008. The exact title is: National Strategies for the Development of Statistics. The corresponding picture of the meeting is illustrated herewith.



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