



Lions Honors the United Nations



UN-ESCWA and the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) were honored on Thursday, 24 April, at a meeting organized by the Steering Commission for the Annual Lions Day with the United Nations, to celebrate “The Importance of Cooperation between the United Nations and the Lions Clubs International”, at the Press Syndicate headquarters in Beirut. The meeting was also an occasion to mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the

International Peacekeeping Forces in Lebanon.

The meeting was attended by Youssef Nusseir, Chief of the Information and Communication Technology division at UN-ESCWA, representing Executive Secretary, Bader Omar AlDafa. Also participating were Tim Reid, UNIFIL Senior Political Affairs Officer, representing Force Commander General Claudio Graziano, Jamal Ibrahim, Ambassador of Sudan at Lebanon, Muhammad Massouda, Officer in Charge of the Embassy of Tunisia in Lebanon, Colonel Ghassan Ezzeddine, representing the Lebanese Army Commander, General Michel Suleiman, Muhammad Baalbaki, President of the Press Syndicate, Farid Kaawar, Governor of Lions District 351 (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan), and Rana Abou Zahr Rifai, President of the “Lions Day with the UN Committee”.

Kaawar and Rifai presented

honorary shields to AlDafa, Graziano and Baalbaki.

AlDafa’s speech highlighted the importance of ensuring factors of economic and social progress, which fosters stability and consolidates friendly interstate relations. Along this line, he noted the progress made in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The percentage of people living in extreme poverty has indeed dropped to less than 20%, while the percentage of children who have access to schools in developing countries has increased by 10%, compared with the 1990s. On the other hand, “woman’s active participation in professional life has risen, while child mortality has decreased globally”, he said. As a regional arm of the United Nations, UN-ESCWA works towards assisting its member countries in achieving these goals. The regional commission also indeed “focused its activities in response to the needs of the region”, with a concentration on five main priorities: “water, energy, globalization, integrated social and economic policies, and technology (namely information and communication technology at that)”.

For his part, Reid explained the importance of the international peacekeepers’ work, pointing out that individuals in this international force represent all international forces in the international organization, which aims to safeguard global peace and security. He noted as well that Lions Clubs and the

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United Nations embody a common vision to create and spread the spirit of understanding among peoples, and contribute to sound citizenship and good governance.

Kaawar and Rifai exposed the work of the Lions Clubs in District 351, which encompasses 86 Clubs and 2000 members, 33% of whom are women. The value of aids and donation the Clubs offer exceeds the amount of 781 thousand US Dollars yearly. ■

Lions Clubs International occupies a permanent consultative seat at the UN Economic and Social Council. Lions Clubs celebrate Lions Day with the UN since 1979, and the cooperation between both parties has led to many positive results on different levels and in different spheres, especially in developing countries.



Safe to Go

UN-ESCWA participated in the General Assembly (GA) session on global road safety crisis held on 31 March 2008 in New York. The GA adopted a resolution that invites all Member-States to participate in the projects to be implemented by UN Regional Commissions to assist low and middle income countries in setting their own national road traffic casualty reduction targets, as well as regional targets. It also invites the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Regional Commissions in cooperation with other partners, to promote multi-sectoral collaboration by organizing Global Road Safety Weeks, including the Global Stakeholders Forums. According to the resolution, the Russian Federation will host the First Global High-Level Conference on Road Safety, to be held in 2009, to bring together delegations of Ministers, and representatives from fields of transport, health, education, safety, and related traffic law enforcement, to discuss progress in implementing the recommendations of the "World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention" and the General Assembly resolutions on improving global road safety, and provide an opportunity for Member States to exchange information and best practices.

UN-ESCWA also represented the Regional Commissions in the 8th meeting of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration (UNRSC) on 1-2 April in New York. It presented the steps that have been taken lately by the regional commissions on road safety. The meeting discussed the new terms of the Collaboration; the newly published manuals on road safety; and the steps that will be taken for the regional commissions with WHO to prepare for the forthcoming high level conference in 2009. ■



Informal Employment Statistics



In Palestine, UN-ESCWA is implementing a development account project entitled "Inter-regional Cooperation for the Measurement of Informal Sector and Informal Employment". It was in this context that it organized a workshop on Informal Employ-

ment and Informal Data Collection: Strategy, tools and advocacy" from 13 to 15 April 2008 in Amman, Jordan. The objectives of the workshop were to enhance the participants' understanding of the objectives of the project, its measurement issues and activities; and assist Palestine in the operationalization of the unified data collection strategy to improve measurement of informal sector.

Participants included survey statisticians and national accounts from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. In addition, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) was invited to share its expertise in implementing the project in other regional commissions, as well as one consultant from the Development Institutions and Long Term Analysis research center (DIAL). Participants from the Department of Statistics in Jordan were invited as observers.

The meeting covered utilizing ongoing labor force surveys to estimate informal employment and construct a frame for the identification of informal sector enterprises, and designing such surveys. ■

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