



## ESCWA and ALO: Stronger Cooperation and Coordination



In an effort to further anchor cooperation and coordination between them, ESCWA and the Arab Labor Organization (ALO) signed on Wednesday 22 April an agreement to revitalize the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 1986 and renewed in 2008. This agreement covers cooperation measures that extend until 2011.

Signing the mechanism were ESCWA Executive Secretary, Bader Omar AlDafa and ALO Director-General Ahmad Muhammad Luqman. The signing ceremony was also attended by ALO Head of the Administrative Affairs, Tamer Mustapha Tamo, acting ESCWA Deputy Executive Secretary Muhammad

Abdul Razzak, Secretary of the Commission, Albagir Ibrahim Adam, Chief of the Economic Development and Globalization Division (EDGD), Nabil Safwat, Social Policy and Participatory Development Team Leader in the Social Development Division (SDD), Walid Hilal and Chief of the Economic Statistics Section in the Statistics Division (SD), Giovanni Savio.

The mechanism agreed upon will strengthen cooperation and coordination between ESCWA and ALO, namely through partnerships in conferences, workshops, and common activities. On the economic level, the mechanism focuses on studying the effects of the global finan-

cial crisis over the economic life in ESCWA countries, convening to examine the issue of employment in the ESCWA region and exploring women's economic empowerment. It also tackles drafting a report on the successful accomplish-



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ments of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Arab countries, namely on the fronts of employment and poverty, alongside other matters. Coordination also takes on social colors, since some points of the agreement concern exploring the consequences of the financial crisis over the social life in the countries of the region, as well as migration, and youth employment in the Arab world. ■

# Numbers around the World



ESCWA co-organized a “Workshop on E-Commerce Statistics and External Trade Indicators” from 30 March to 1 April 2009 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The meeting came as an activity of the Project “Strengthening the Development of International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) and the Compilation of E-commerce in Member Countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)”. The Commission’s partners in the meeting were Dubai Customs and Dubai World.

The meeting aimed to discuss the importance of E-commerce related to internation-

al merchandise trade statistics; present and discuss the study prepared on this subject; discuss the production and the dissemination of international merchandise trade indicators; and exchange expertise between the ESCWA member countries.

Participating in the event were representatives of national statistical offices, customs administrations and central banks in ESCWA member countries and experts from the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Also participating was an interna-

tional consultant on trade statistics.

The meeting concluded with a set of recommendations, touching on the demand from ESCWA and international organizations to provide technical support in regard of compilation of international trade statistics; and the importance of grasping methodologies and guidelines presented and discussed during the workshop. They also highlighted the importance of sharing good experiences among member countries and with countries outside the region. Recommendations called on ESCWA member countries to produce and disseminate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) indicators and international merchandise trade indicators; and underscored the importance of having a national committee to follow up on issues related to E-commerce, provided that membership in it extends to national statistical offices, customs administrations, central banks, communication associations and other national institutions that have similar activities in this area.



**In Beirut,** ESCWA organized the fifth meeting of the Task Force on Population and Housing Censuses from 23 to 24 March 2009, at the UN House.

The meeting gathered members of national statistical offices in the ESCWA region alongside regional experts. Participants worked on reviewing and inserting comments for editing on the Arabic translation of the Population and Principles of Population and Housing Censuses (revision 2). The meeting also presented

Media in Census for discussion. Participants also discussed planning a census in a governorate and shared good practice in this area.

The meeting concluded with a number of recommendations which shed light on the importance of finalizing the Arabic translation of the handbook on the Population & Principles of Population and Housing Censuses- 2010 round- revision 2; disseminate countries’ experiences in the area of population and housing censuses.

**In Rome,** ESCWA organized a “Workshop on Data Quality and External Trade Indices”, in collaboration with MEDSTATII, from 10 to 13 March 2009 as an activity of the Project “Strengthening the Development of International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) and the compilation of e-commerce in Member Countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)”.



The meeting aimed to raise awareness on trade indices; discuss the trade indices calculation; discuss the different ways of disseminating trade data; and exchange expertise among the countries. Representatives of national statistical offices and customs administration participated in the meeting alongside experts from the statistical cooperation program with Mediterranean countries (MED-STAT-II) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT).

At the end of the meeting, a number of recommendations were issued, namely centering on: the necessity of measurement of import/export prices to meet the needs of several users; the importance of having efficient validation methods for producing unit value indices available and at hand; the need for more practical and technical training in the field of trade indices; the importance of collaboration among national compilers in trade statistics and producer price index (PPI); and encouraging member countries to adapt practical suitable tools for dealing with extraction on line of important volumes of data. ■

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