



Since Public Policy is for Everyone...



Experts and specialists in the social development field, representing ESCWA governments and civil society institutions, the private sector, regional and international organizations gathered in an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) to deliberate on ESCWA regional Guide entitled “enhancing government-civil so-

ciety participation in public policy processes”, at the UN-House, Beirut, on 29 and 30 April 2009. The meeting dawned from ESCWA resolution No. 285 (25th session) on enhancing national dialogues and consultations on social policy among government entities, civil society organizations and the private sector,

based on a comprehensive participatory approach.

The meeting aimed at discussing the orientations of the ESCWA regional Guide and presenting suggestions for improvement as well as deliberating on other relevant issues. Participants tackled the issue of the Participatory Social Development approach, touching on the different formulation stages and implementation methods required to apply it, in addition to ESCWA field experience and lessons learned in this regard. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) presented another topic for discussion, through which experts elaborated the factors and conditions affecting CSOs role as well as the indicators related to forging



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Poverty Measurement

Despite International and regional efforts, poverty remains a global problem. Poor people often lack adequate food and shelter, access to education and health, and suffer deprivations that keep them from leading the kind of life that everyone values. They also face extreme vulnerability to ill health, economic dislocation, and natural disasters.

Good quality of poverty statistics are needed to meet the demands of the political system and to satisfy the information needs of planners and policy makers. In addition to that, poverty statistics are crucial for the formulation and implementation of adequate poverty alleviation programs.

ESCWA member countries are facing difficulties

Since Public Policy is for Everyone... (Cont.)

their engagement and participation with the government in public policy processes. Participants also outlined the Individual and Institutional Capacity-Building Strategy, dwelling on its fundamental elements and basic components, its implementation mechanism, its various constituting programmes, and the advantages it represents in terms of establishing knowledge-sharing networks and promoting various development issues.

Participants expressed satisfaction with the guide, which addresses development issues at the most basic levels. In this sense, social partners would be more willing to work together to implement it, giving their support to information promotion and capacity-building processes it tackled.

The meeting also debated other interrelated issues, namely the role of the media in mobilizing public opinion on development issues, the legal frameworks regulating civil society participation in decision-making, and the social observatories in their capacity as a tool to enhance government-civil society participation in public policy processes. ■

Poverty Measurement (Cont.)

in collecting data and calculating poverty prevalence rates that accurately reflect the state of poverty in the region. Knowledge on concepts and definitions on compilation of poverty statistics in accordance with international standards need to be upgraded in the ESCWA member countries.

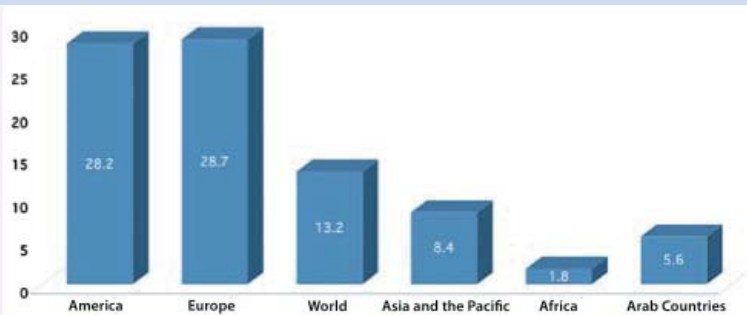
In the context of improving poverty measurements in the ESCWA region, regional and international experts met upon the invitation of ESCWA in the context of an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on "Poverty Measurement", held on 28-29 April 2009 at the UN House in Beirut.

Participants deliberated on two studies that were prepared by consultants on the subjects of: Measurement of Poverty: methodological issues and Integrated Household Survey-IHS. Building upon comments during the meeting, the studies will be revised to constitute a regional guideline to be used in the future as one of the training materials in regional training workshops. ■



Facts and Figures:

Regional Internet Penetration Rates (2004)



Source: Review of Information and Communications Technology and Development, Issue No. 10 Internet World Stats. World Internet Usage and Population Statistics. Retrieved 18 April 2008. Available at: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>

Internet users in the Arab world account for less than 6 per cent of the global rates of internet users, which indicates a decrease in the access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT), or perhaps

even the Internet in the region, and reveals the pressing need to exert much effort on this scale to ensure sustainability in Arab countries. Figures show that the rate of Internet penetration in the Arab region is much lower

that the global one, and the second lowest rate after that of Africa. Gaps exist as well between Arab countries concerning Internet access rates and Internet usage per 100 individuals. ■

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