



UN-ESCWA Participates in UNCTAD XII



UN-ESCWA Executive Secretary Bader Omar AlDafa spoke at several events during the 12th Ministerial Conference of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XII) on 20-25 April 2008 in Accra, Ghana. Organized every four years, the UNCTAD Ministerial conferences are its highest decision-making body. Participants included Heads of States and Governments; Ministers from 192 Member States; Heads or representatives of United Nations organizations and specialized agencies; inter-governmental organizations; international experts; and representatives of the civil society and private sector.

Under the overall theme of the Conference, "Addressing the Opportunities and Challenges of Globalization for Development," AlDafa spoke of the various economic impacts of globalization, including its

effect on poverty reduction, wealth and employment generation and income distribution from a regional perspective. He also explained how the growth in South-South trade, investment and Aid for Trade is transforming the regional economic landscape. The rises in trade in services, and the related expansion in regional labour migration, were among the topics that were discussed as well.

AlDafa participated in the launching of the Chief Executive Board (CEB) Interagency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity, along with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and Heads of UNCTAD, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the International Trade Centre (ITC). On be-

half of the UN Regional Commissions, AlDafa welcomed the Cluster initiative that would contribute to strengthening the interlinkages between the normative and the operational work of the UN and between its country-level, regional and global operations. Recognizing the need to succeed in the effective operationalization of the "One UN" initiative, he

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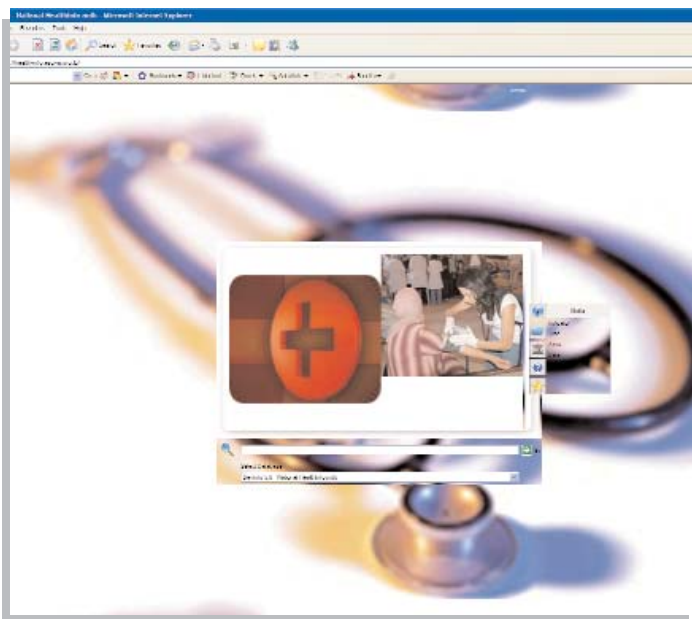
Health Statistics

said agencies must work synergistically building on their respective areas of expertise.

With the President of Finland, Mrs. Tarja Halonen and other high-level officials, AlDafa spoke at the interactive thematic Roundtable on "Globalization, Development and Poverty Reduction: Their Social and Gender Dimensions." He highlighted the multi-dimensional aspects of globalization in the UN-



Health Statistics



UN-ESCWA has launched the online version of “HealthInfo”, the customized application of “DevInfo” that hosts national Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) indicators on health for member countries. “DevInfo” Update, the newsletter issued by the UN Development Group, covered the news. The data contained in “HealthInfo” covers the timeframe from 1990 to 2006, where available, and was supplied by a survey and research of national publications, conducted as part of the preparation of a pamphlet on health and the MDGs in the region. The pamphlet was published in December 2007 and represents a concerted effort to provide evidence-based regional information on the health sector in UN-ESCWA member countries. It further recognizes the progress made by each country to attain the MDGs.

UN-ESCWA has contributed significantly to building the capacities of members on the use of “DevInfo”. It will also train producers and users of health statistics from national statistical offices, health ministries, as well as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the World Health Organization (WHO) regional and national offices on “DevInfo v5.0”. Capacity-building activities aim to advance the use of “DevInfo” as a common tool for the dissemination of data and, more importantly, provide guidance to professionals in the field of health data on the effective communication of information. One of the next steps for UN-ESCWA is to use the tools available in DevInfo to improve the overall quality of indicators and resolve existing data discrepancies in the health sector.

For further information, please visit:

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ESCWA Region, including the key challenges of unemployment, migration and gender disparity. He emphasized that there was a recent surge in efforts of governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to address some of these concerns.

The Executive Secretary also participated in a side event on “Regional Perspectives on the Aid for Trade Initiative Implementation,” organized by all the UN Regional Commissions. During this event, he presented the supply-side constraints and impediments to producing goods and services competitively in the UN-ESCWA region. Some of these major constraints are infra-

structural and institutional constraints, trade facilitation measures, non-tariff barriers and labour mobility.

The Conference concluded with the adoption of the “Accra Declaration”, which, along with the more action-oriented “Accra Accord”, set a broad agenda for international efforts to make trade help the progress of developing countries towards prosperity. Member States recommitted themselves to free and fair trade and vowed to redress current strategies that have lagged behind in reducing global poverty at the midpoint of efforts in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. ■



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