



Let us Compete in Arabic!

UN-ESCWA is launching a series of Digital Arabic Content (DAC) national competitions in a number of member countries through several workshops, in cooperation with specialized local incubators. Winning projects will receive a one-year incubation at the technological incubators of each country.

The series of competition launchings will be initiated on 25 June in Palestine followed by Lebanon on 26 June. July will witness the rest of the launchings in other participating countries. The series of workshops include, beside the launch of the competition, the modalities of participation, a demonstration of opportunities and importance of the DAC industry, and the services that partner incubators will provide winning projects during the incubation period. Partners include the following specialized incubators: Berytech Technology and Health (Lebanon); the Palestinian Information and Communications Technology Incubator (PICI-Palestine); Jordan Innovation Centre at Philadelphia University (Jordan); the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Incubator (Syria); and the Aden ICT Incubator (Yemen).



More than a competition, this project offers entrepreneurs and creative-thinking university graduates the opportunity to develop their ideas on marketable ICT products, and opens the door to the establishment of start-up enterprises that produce them. It is part of the implementation of the "Promotion of the Digital Arabic Content Industry through Incubation" Project, which aims to develop the DAC industry in Western Asia by supporting and promoting its applications. UN-ESCWA is implementing the project in cooperation with the aforementioned incubators. Several studies and an expert group meeting have been organized so far, resulting in the establishment of cooperation bases with partner incubators. ■

For more details, please visit the Website of the project:
<http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/projects/dac/index.asp>

Indicators for the Environment

In collaboration with the Agency for Sustainable Development, the Presidency of Meteorology and Environment (PME) in Saudi Arabia, and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), UN-ESCWA organized a national workshop on indicators of sustainable development, from 9 to 11 June, 2008 in Jeddah.

Prince Turki bin Nasser bin Abdul Aziz President of Meteorology and Environmental Protection, inaugurated this meeting and expressed the interest of his country in achieving sustainable development, and its desire to fulfill its commitments towards the outcome of global summits at the international and regional levels on Sustainable Development.

This workshop came as a follow-up to the outcome of a previous meeting held in June 2007, in Kuwait by the League

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of Arab States (LAS) on indicators of priority about the environment and sustainable development in the Arab region, where Saudi Arabia agreed on the voluntary application of the said indicators.

The meeting defined these indicators, Saudi Arabia selected its national indicators and appointed national authorities responsible for their collection. After discussions, participants in the meeting also developed an action plan for the collection methods of the indicators through the coordination among all national authorities and the issuance of a national report on sustainable development in accordance with the plan of action. ■



Road Safety



UN-ESCWA participated in the preparatory meetings for the workshop on “Establishing the Arab Mashreq Road Safety Partnership”, along with the other organizing parties: the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) and Shell. The meetings were held on 10-11 June, 2008 in Doha, Qatar with the participation of the Ministry of Interior, the Traffic and Patrols Department and the National Campaign for Road Accidents Prevention in Qatar. Discussions included all technical, administrative and financial issues related to the workshop. It was agreed to hold it on 21 and 22 October, 2008 in Doha. Representatives of governments, non-governmental organizations, and other agencies involved in road safety in the UN-ESCWA region will be invited. ■

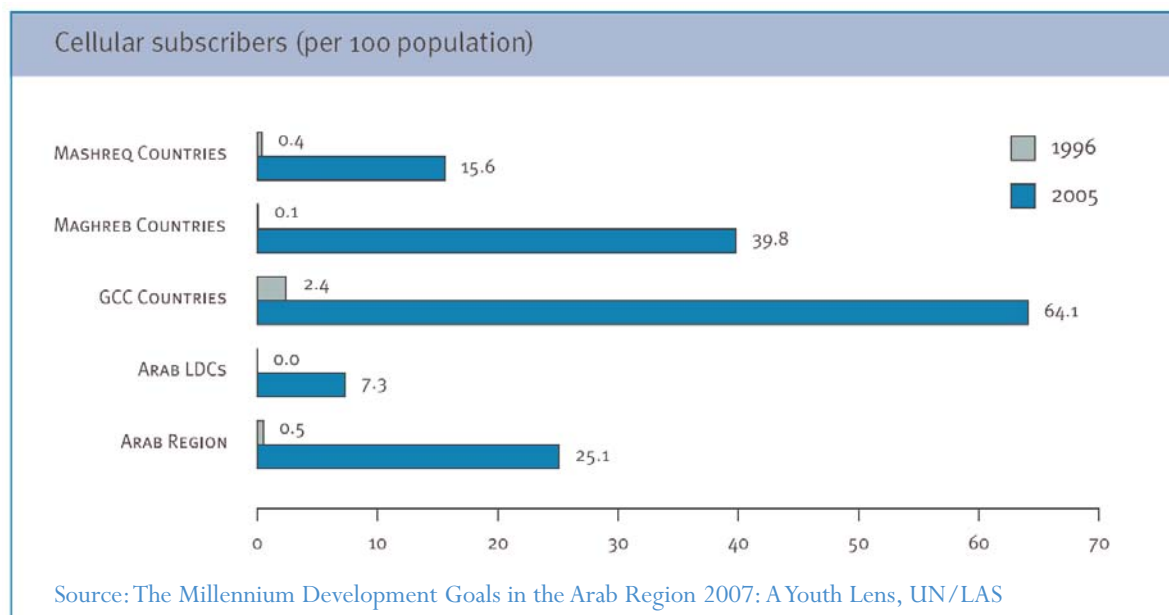
Socially Speaking...

UN-ESCWA and the Palestinian Ministry of Planning signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote cooperation on social policies. The signing came on the sidelines of the UN-ESCWA 25th Ministerial Session (26-29 May, Yemen). The MoU defines a general framework for social projects in Palestine, including the Integrated Social Policy (ISP) project and the Capacity-Building in Participatory Development project.

The ISP project includes issuing a report on social policy in Palestine that will identify the current status of social policy in the country, define political, social and economic impediments to social policies, monitor public policies and recognize criteria that governmental institutions adopt in formulating them.

Meetings are scheduled to be organized with stakeholders and experts, in addition to a national conference to launch dialogue between the government on one hand and the civil society and private sector on the other; put together an integrated social policy based on social equity and justice; and define mechanisms and ways to implement this policy.

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