



Equitable Cities



Kuwait City hosted an expert group meeting on "Urban Governance (Equitable Cities)", which UN-ESCWA held in cooperation with the Technical Secretariat of the Arab Council of Ministers for Social Affairs/Development and Social Policies Division/General Secretariat of the League of Arab States (LAS), Arab Towns Organization (ATO), the Kuwaiti Office of the Minister of State for Municipality Affairs and all concerned governmental institutions in Kuwait, on 10-12 December 2007, in the ATO headquarters, Kuwait City.

The meeting was attended by Mr. Abdel Aziz Youssef Al Adassani, the Secretary-General of the ATO; Mrs. Inas Makkawi, the Representative of the Technical Secretariat of the Arab Council of Ministers for Social Affairs in the League of Arab States (LAS); Mr. Atef Kubursi, UN-ESCWA Deputy Executive Secretary; and Mr. Moussa Al Sarraf, Kuwaiti Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipality Affairs, who hosted the meeting.

Participants in the meeting also included national experts con-

cerned with housing, municipalities, local administration and social issues in the Arab region, in addition to official representatives from ministries and relevant governmental parties, a number of governors, mayors, and local authority representatives, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), businesses, the private sector, regional organizations, United Nations organizations, Arab and regional funds and parties, and donor countries. The meeting was also attended by a number of concerned consultants and academics, working on housing and urban development, in addition to a number of intellectuals, media figures and activists.

The meeting was considered the first regional activity organized by UN-ESCWA to follow-up on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Arab countries, specifically in urban areas, in order to achieve Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, of MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability and Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries, landlocked countries and

small island developing States, of Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development.

The aim of the meeting was to generate knowledge consensus on urban governance in the Arab region and how it contributes to the developmental role of cities; urge Arab countries to evaluate what has been done so far towards alleviating urban poverty -2000 till 2007- in the context of implementing the MDGs, specifically Target 11 of MDG 7; shed light on MDGs in Arab countries in an attempt to establish consensus on the partnerships among governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector and the media; establish dialogue and ex-

change regional and international experiences about means and mechanisms of implementing the MDGs, specifically Target 11 in the urban areas; and identify international and regional choices and courses on the role of governance and urban governance in development and in countering urban inequities and their socio-economic effects, through selected experiences.

The meeting identified factors that support the activation of good urban governance components in the Arab countries in order to investigate challenges to the gradual implementation of Target 11 and to identify the principal conceptual approaches to support governments and their development partners in devising city policies related to reducing urban poverty and its threat to secure tenure and social stability. Participants also discussed the draft document of the "Set of Regional Indicators on implementing Target 11 of the MDGs in the Arab Countries", relative to the cross-referencing between the mechanisms and indicators of monitoring local governance and those of monitoring Target 11 in cities and urban areas. The set of regional indicators represents a major move towards identifying regional-specific indicators under Target 11 of the MDGs, to implement, monitor and assess desired results by 2020.

Participants formulated a final statement in which they asserted the necessity of dialogue, and ex-



My First Year as Secretary-General



Ethics, the fight against global warming, the end of poverty and the resolution of political crises on the global level are a few of the subjects that United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon tackled in an address on the occasion of the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008.

Concluding an especially busy year, Ban spoke for a more dynamic and efficient UN, which responds quicker to the new challenges it faces within all three pillars of its work: peace and security, economic and social development and human rights. Ban recapped the main events and achievements of his first year at the head of the World Organization, highlighting the priorities of times to come.

The Secretary-General emphasized the need to change "the UN culture and re-engineer the United Nations for life in our fast-paced modern world". "We need to move faster and more effectively in responding to global challenges" Ban said, adding "As one UN team, we need to be more mobile and more flexible. And we must meet the highest standards of ethics, transparency and accountability."

Such reform did indeed begin in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and will move next to the Department of Political Affairs, where emphasis will be placed on preventive diplomacy.

The fight against climate change and global warming is also a subject high on the agenda of the UN, and the top priority of the Secretary-General, who exerted extensive effort this past year to turn the eyes of the world to this

plight. In 2007, Ban traveled to "Antarctica, the Amazon, the Andes, Lake Chad and the Great Man-made River in Libya in an effort to dramatize the scale of the problem", launched the "latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which garnered another Nobel Peace Prize for the UN", and "worked to galvanize global public opinion and political will in advance of the all-important climate change conference in Bali, where world leaders took a vital first step toward reaching a comprehensive climate change accord by 2009".

In 2007, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were also a main area of concern, with the establishment of the MDG Africa Steering Group "to address the special problems of Africa, home to the "bottom billion" of the world's poor".

During the coming year, the UN's role in development will be a key interest to the Secretary-General who will also dedicate himself to the success of peace efforts around the world, namely in places such as Darfur and Iraq where the World Organization has established peace missions or initiated peace talks. The UN is deploying all possible effort indeed to put an end to humanitarian and political crises in places such as Bangladesh, Congo, Iraq, Sudan and the Middle East. It also seeks to prevent Genocide and Mass Atrocities-and has appointed a Special Adviser for this matter- or to hold accountable those who did participate in assassinations, through Special Tribunals, such as the one for Lebanon, which is on track presently.

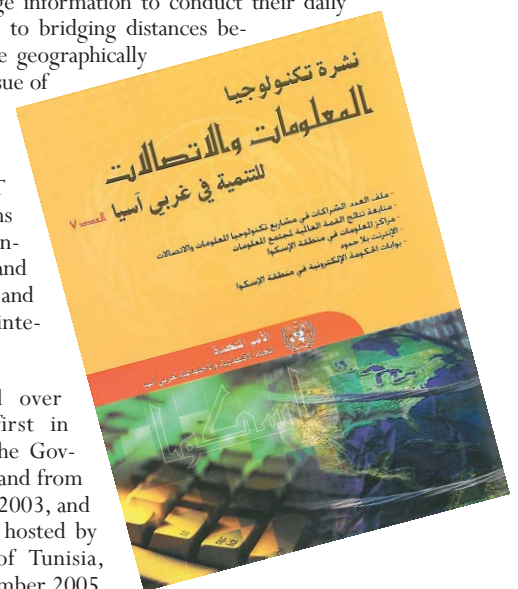
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changing international and regional expertise on the implementation of MDGs on the urban level, to ensure the operation of several courses, the most important of which being the expansion of the scope of analysis and the understanding of the indicator of good urban governance that encompasses developmental issues of direct influence over the lives of slum-dwellers, with respect to the national and regional specificities in the countries of the Arab region, which were discussed as follows: political will as a strategic framework to concluding alliances for sustainable development; the right to housing; social policy; local governance and the performance of cities, mirrored through qualitative and quantitative indicators according the suggested order, which represents regional initiatives for good urban governance.

Information Communication Technology Review

UNESCWA published the seventh issue of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Review and Development. The seventh issue deals with the subject of partnerships in ICT projects. It also presents the progress in implementing the results of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), in light of the yearly meetings held by the International Telecommunication Union to follow-up the projects and initiatives implemented within the context of the Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda. The issue also lays out the activities that UN-ESCWA organized during the last six months, including workshops, expert meetings, training sessions, and recommendations formulated within workshops on establishing the Arabic Digital Content and developing the E-government. The review also sheds light on ways in which the Internet contributed to the development of the freedom of expression and opinion, as well as mechanisms to ensure the security of the E-mail, and safeguard the privacy of information. One of the articles in the review presents the most popular social websites these days, famous for offering people an electronic room that enables them to meet, interact and exchange information to conduct their daily dealings, in addition to bridging distances between those who are geographically apart. The seventh issue of the ICT review also highlights information centers that facilitate the use of ICT and ICT applications safely within governmental institutions and business companies, and guarantee the maintenance of informatics.

WSIS was held over two phases, the first in Geneva hosted by the Government of Switzerland from 10 to 12 December 2003, and the second in Tunis hosted by the Government of Tunisia, from 16 to 18 November 2005.



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