



UN Regional Commissions Cooperate on Energy Efficiency

Officials from the United Nations regional commissions are working together to conduct their first joint study on energy efficiency. Meeting in Geneva on 4 June for the Global Energy Efficiency 21 (GEE21) project, representatives of the regional commissions agreed to consolidate each commission's input for the study by the end of October this year.



The five regional commissions are ESCWA, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

The GEE21 project was officially launched in Poznan, Poland, last December and aims to share the expertise acquired from UNECE's Energy Efficiency 21 Project (EE21), which promotes the formation of an energy efficiency market in Eastern Europe, so that cost-effective investments could provide a self-financing method of reducing global greenhouse gas emissions.

Over the next several months, the work of the regional commissions under the GEE21 will concentrate on assessing how they could effectively respond to the transfer, adoption and local adaptation of activities such as those carried out by UNECE in energy efficiency investments.

Energy efficiency is widely regarded as the only self-financing method to fight climate change and it accounts for 54% of the abatement effort projected by 2030 by the International Energy Agency in its "BLUE Scenario" of the "Energy Technology Perspective 2008". However, little progress has hitherto been achieved. ■

Information from ISeek

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Road Safety in Egypt

Upon a request from the Ministry of Transport in Egypt, ESCWA sent an expert in transport and trade facilitation to the country on a mission that included field visits and a meeting to assess the state of roads there. The Regional Commission's expert, Bassam Anani, was assigned to monitor the implementation of the International Road and Railway Agreement in Arab Mashreq in Egypt, in addition to the work of the national transport and trade facilitation committee. Anani was also called upon to hold discussions on hurdles to implementation and solutions to them. The mission concluded with a preliminary agreement on creating a TV Spot on the said agreements, and technical



Road Safety in Egypt (Cont.)

recommendations on road qualifications, road signs and other requirements that should fit the criteria of international agreements.

Anani visited several road axes, and the traffic signs factory at the General Authority For Roads, Bridges And Land Transport. He also held a meeting with the chairman of the General Authority and concerned directors, which ended with an agreement to continue communication and discussions with ESCWA in all implementation phases.

It was also decided that ESCWA would examine the possibility of making a TV Spot on the International Road Agreement to be broadcast in member countries. The spot, which presents and defines the agreement aims at raising awareness about it. Egypt also might include questions about this agreement and the axes of roads it covers in the country in the tests to obtain driving licenses. A special booklet on these issues is also to be produced and distributed. ■



Women and Food Security*

Women are more vulnerable than men to the food crisis. They have a lower social and economic status in nearly all countries of the world. Due to cultural practices in several societies, women and girls eat less and least. This can lead to malnutrition, disease and increased mortality. It also affects their ability to learn and reduces their productivity. Moreover, women have special physical needs: pregnant women without access to sufficient and

sufficiently nutritious food are in greater danger of infections, miscarriages and premature labour. Lactating women without access to nutritious food cannot feed their children sufficiently. ■



Facts

*According to United Nations projections, women comprised 40.7% of the agricultural labour force in 1990 in Lebanon.

*In Egypt, surveys show that the majority of rural women participate in agricultural activities, particularly those related to food security and animal production.

*Although markets for agricultural goods are expanding rapidly, women's access remains limited due to social gender barriers.

*ESCWA Center for Women Newsletter, Vol2, Issue 19, Mar 2009, and www.fao.org/gender

The year 2009 will mark the 35th Anniversary of ESCWA. In this regard, ESCWA's Executive Secretary Mr. Bader ElDafa established a Committee to work on developing a plan for celebrating this occasion. The committee is composed of senior ESCWA staff members alongside members of the Staff Council. Established in 1973, ESCWA was originally called the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA), pursuant to United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution 1818 (LV), and was the successor to the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut (UNESOB). In recognition of the social component of its work, the Commission was redesignated the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in 1985. ESCWA moved its headquarters several times because of regional conditions and instability. Originally established in Beirut, it moved to Baghdad after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and remained in the Iraqi capital until 1991. Following the Second Gulf War in 1991, it relocated to Amman, where it remained until 1997, when it returned to Beirut, its permanent headquarters. ■



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