



ESCWA Weekly News

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ESCWA in the First Saudi Social Development Forum: From Charity to Sustainability



Upon a request from the Society of Majid Bin Abdel Aziz for Development and Social Services, ESCWA participated in the first Social Development Forum (SDF), held in Jeddah from 6 to 8 June 2009. ESCWA representatives Walid Hilal, Chief of the Social Participatory Development (SPD) Section, and Nadine Daou, a research assistant in the SPD Section, managed and moderated a workshop session on “the role of civil society organizations in public governance” and “the capacity-building strategy needed to improve public governance systems and procedures.” They tackled the pitfalls and challenges of civil society and the need for a capacity-building

strategy, underscoring the constituents of the said strategy that ESCWA has drawn up. They also took part in the formulation of the final SDF recommendations.

In the context of the first presentation theme, Hilal underscored the hurdles and challenges faced by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the need to forge a more engaged civil society in the public realm. Complementing that presentation, Daou emphasized the need for a well-defined capacity-building strategy that provides qualified individual and institutional capacities in participation management and creates processes and institutions that contribute to

transparent and accountable governance. The presentation also tackled the main constituents of ESCWA capacity-building strategy needed to enhance civil society’s role in the social domain on the one hand and public-civic participation on the other.

ESCWA representatives were also urged to formally take part in the formulation and endorsement of the final SDF recommendations. They provided substantive and technical advisory inputs to the Drafting Committee (DC), representing the variety of views and perspectives elaborated by participants in the ESCWA workshop session, validating the draft recommendations’ list that was jointly prepared by the DC and suggesting the required adjustments to the content.

The mission highlighted the perspective of public-civic participation and the linkages between participatory approach, transparency-based governance and sound public policy processes. It was also an opportunity to build new ties with active national organizations and Ministries whose work fall within SDD priorities and program of work. ■

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Integrated Social Policy in Palestine

ESCWA held in Ramallah a national conference on integrated social policy to discuss the findings of a report on Palestinian social planning. The creation of a social observatory and a national economic and social council were also laid out, and was included among concluding recommendations.

Prepared upon the request of the Palestinian Authority, the report reviews the Authority’s experience in economic and social policy planning, implementation and monitoring from 1994 to 2008.

Participants also discussed country experiences on integrated approaches to

Integrated Social Policy in Palestine (Cont.)



social policy from Egypt and Malaysia that could serve as a tool for development and so-

cial change, foster greater social solidarity and citizenship, and strengthen the social contract between government and citizens. Conclusions and recommendations included (i) the possible establishment of a national economic and social council that would serve as a consultative forum on social policy and planning; and (ii) the creation of a social observatory.

The conference was held on 9 June in co-operation with the Ministry of Planning and

Administrative Development of the Palestinian Authority, and it was attended by a broad range of representatives from ministries, civil society, private sector and the media.

Through its Social Development Division, ESCWA will continue to support the Palestinian Authority in developing an integrated social policy – in cooperation with other UN agencies active in the field. ■

Facts and Figures:

Births Attended by Skilled Health Personnel in ESCWA Region

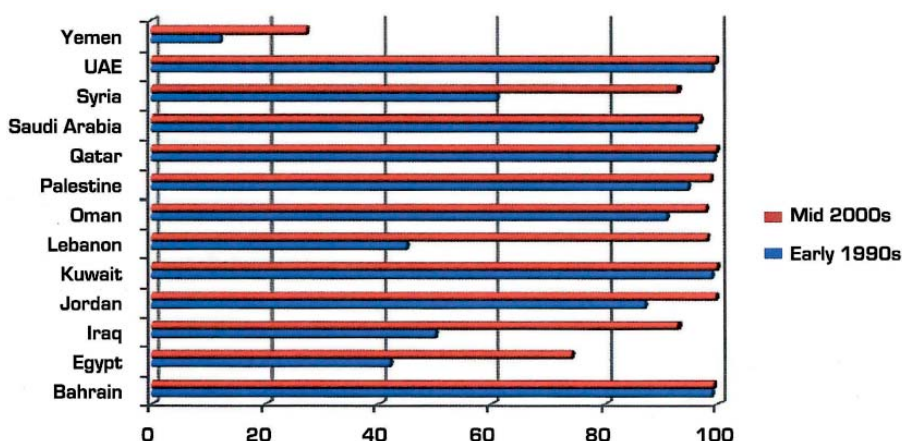
Evidence shows the positive relationship between the presence of a skilled health worker at delivery and the reduction of maternal mortality. It is therefore assumed that the proportion of deliveries attended by skilled health personnel is a key indicator for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) target of reducing maternal mortality.

WHO estimates of the percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel in Western Asia is 75 per cent, higher than both the world average of 63 per cent and of many other regions. In fact, the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries has been high since the 1990s and is nearing universality.

In addition, great progress has been made in Iraq, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Egypt has also made a big leap in bridging the gap while Yemen made some modest progress. Both these countries will need to exert more efforts to provide pregnant women with such services. ■

The Term "Skilled attendant" refers to "an accredited health professional – such as a midwife, doctor or nurse - who has been educated and trained to proficiency in the skills needed to manage normal (uncomplicated) pregnancies, childbirth and the immediate postnatal period, and in the identification, management and referral of complications in women and newborns" (World Health Organization, 2004)

Births Attended by Skilled Health Personnel in ESCWA Region



Source: Health and Millennium Development Goals in the ESCWA Region, ESCWA, 2008

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