



UN-ESCWA Weekly News

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The Sudan Joins UN-ESCWA



The Sudan has recently acceded to the membership of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA). The Commission has thus come to include 14 member countries. The accession comes in response to the request of the Sudan and the recommendation of the UN-ESCWA

25th Ministerial Session held in Sana'a, Yemen on 26-29 May 2008.

The UN Economic and Social Council approved the request by the Sudan to be admitted to membership in the Commission. The United Nations does not proscribe a member of one

regional commission from being at the same time a member of another regional commission. Furthermore, most of the other regional commissions have as members countries that are not located in the region that they serve.

For his part, UN-ESCWA Executive Secretary Bader Omar AlDafa considered that the accession of new members to UN-ESCWA further upholds its position as a regional arm of the UN, and a forum for expertise concerned with the region.

UN-ESCWA thus includes: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

IN THIS ISSUE

- The Sudan Joins UN-ESCWA
- Fifth Anniversary of the Baghdad Bombing
- Pursuing Support to Palestine...
- Facts and Figures

The objective of UN-ESCWA is to support economic and social cooperation among the countries of the region and promote the development process in order to achieve regional integration. ■

Fifth Anniversary of the Baghdad Bombing

On 19 August, the UN Staff in Lebanon observed the fifth anniversary of the Iraq bombing. The staff stood a minute of silence to pay tribute to their colleagues who fell while fulfilling their duties.

The suicide bombing that targeted the UN headquarters in Baghdad on August 19, 2003 killed 22 staffers, including top envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello. Another 150 people were injured.

At the UN Headquarters, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the survivors of the bombing attended a ceremony, which paid tribute to the victims with a reading of their names and observance of a minute of silence. A wreath-laying was held at the memorial plaque in the lobby of the General Assembly building.

A classical music piece called "Song without Borders" composed

by Emmy Award winner Steve Heitzeg was performed in memory of the UN staff who have been killed in the line of duty.

Describing the victims as "true heroes, charging into a dangerous



Pursuing Support to Palestine...

In the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UN-ESCWA and the Palestinian Ministry of Planning to strengthen cooperation in the field of social policy, and through the project that promotes social dialogue in the field of social policy as well as the capacity-building project on participatory development, a meeting was held on 2 July 2008 in Ram Allah and another on 28 July 2008 in Gaza to review the draft preliminary plan

of the report on social policy in Palestine.

Participants in the meetings were representatives of governmental and non-governmental institutions, the private sector, academics and experts in the field of social policy. The meetings discussed the current social policies in Palestine overshadowed by a relief nature, and the necessity of developing a vision of social policy based on social justice, equality and equal opportunities, which would lead



to a shift from a relief nature to a development one.

Taking into consideration the specificity of the situation of Gaza especially after the separation was recommended by the participants. They also

stressed the need for the report to include a clear picture of the integrated social policy concept and philosophy, and to include a set of recommendations on the social policy that could be responsive to the specificity of Palestine. ■

Facts and Figures: The Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region 2007

Goal 2: Achieve Universal primary Education

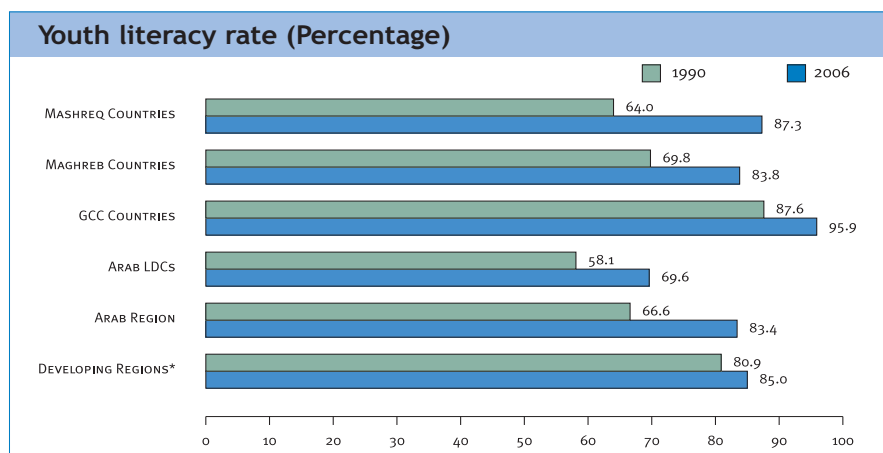
Youth Literacy rate (percentage)

Youth literacy rates increased by about 20 percentage points between 1990 and 2005 to reach 85 percent, according to UNESCO.

Improvement in the youth literacy rate in the region increased by 23 percentage points over the said period to reach 87.3 percent in 2005 according to UNESCO.

Youth literacy rates in GCC Countries reached almost 96 percent, the highest literacy level in the region, and significantly higher than the average youth literacy rate in the developing world at large.

Arab LDGs remain the countries with the most urgent need to make substantial efforts to achieve universal primary education. ■



Source: The Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region 2007: A Youth Lens, UN/LAS.

Fifth Anniversary of the Baghdad Bombing (Cont.)

situation to help people in desperate need – and paying ultimate price”, Ban said in his remarks to the solemn ceremony, “their ideals survive. Through them, so do ours.”

“By keeping alive the memory of those talented, selfless, compassionate and irreplaceable people we lost five years ago, we remind the world of what the UN stands for. And we recall again why the UN’s work must be protected and supported; for the sake of peace and justice, now and for generations to come,” Ban concluded.

In 2007 alone, 42 staff members of the United Nations system were killed around the world. Since the first UN peacekeeping operation was established in 1948, 709 peacekeepers have been killed in malicious acts. ■

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