



ESCWA Assesses Palestine's Road Safety



ESCWA recently conducted a field visit to Palestine to assess road safety there and to discuss with the Ministry of Transportation establishing the Higher Council for Road Safety. The Regional Commission has also suggested organizing a training workshop on road safety management for professionals of the field.

Land transport expert at the ESCWA Economic Development and Globalization Division Basam Anani visited the Palestinian Minister of Transportation, Saadi Al Karnaz, and examined with him details of creating the Higher Council for Road Safety. ESCWA will submit its recommendations to the Ministry on the organizational aspects of the Council and other matters. Anani also explored with Karnaz the possibility of providing train-

ing programs for Palestinian road safety professionals. ESCWA has the capacity and expertise to offer training in all relevant sectors in this field. And in this context, the Regional Commission intends to organize a specialized workshop by the end of the year on the drafting and management of road safety strategies.

Despite the challenges facing road safety, such as the shortage of funds and lack of specialized professionals, the experience of Palestine in this area is considered an advanced one from many perspectives. The Ministry of Transportation is in charge of issuing licenses for drivers and vehicles, and it allocates 15 per cent of mandatory vehicle insurance revenues to the Palestinian Fund for Road Victims.

The Ministry of Education


and Higher Education had also included road safety in school curricula. Students learn about "health and public safety" as part of the Health and Environmental Sciences program. This chapter teaches them how to read road signs, and it gives them awareness about causes of road accidents and ways to avoid them as well as knowledge of traffic laws and regulations.

Children also have a chance of learning road safety rules and regulations through an interactive electronic game produced by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Birzeit University. Dubbed "Children on the Road," the game educates children and trains them on road safety by teaching them the meanings behind road signs, how to cross streets and play safely. ■

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HIV/AIDS Training at ESCWA

While we may think we know enough about HIV/AIDS, the increasing numbers of people infected with the virus in the world clearly demonstrate a lack of knowledge that allows this epidemic to continue expanding and affecting more lives. Against this background, and in cooperation with the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), ESCWA is providing training sessions on the AIDS Learning Strategy to all UN staff in Lebanon. The training stems from the UN Personnel Policy related to HIV/AIDS which requires providing staff with enough information to protect themselves and others from HIV/AIDS and to work with HIV patients. 

HIV/AIDS Training at ESCWA (Cont.)

Thirty three million people around the world live with HIV/AIDS, 380, 000 of whom are in the Middle East and North Africa region. The AIDS Learning Strategy sessions start off with shocking numbers that ease their way into the step on modes of transmission and prevention. While ignorance and fear are the main factors in spreading the disease, prevention can be attained in most cases through exercising a bit of caution, the sessions show. They also delve into more scientific details, speaking of the phases the virus passes through in the body and the testing methods. Discussions also extend to the effects of stigma and discrimination on people living with HIV/AIDS and the UN personnel policy on HIV/AIDS. ■



UN Marks World Humanitarian Day for First Time

The United Nations General Assembly last year decided to dedicate 19 August to honor all humanitarian workers. So this year the world has for the first time celebrated Humanitarian Day in order to increase public understanding of humanitarian activities worldwide and honor humanitarian operatives.

In his message for the day, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described it as “a day on which we renew our commitment to help vulnerable, voiceless and marginalized people wherever they may be. That is the abiding mission of the humanitarian community.”

Humanitarian workers deserve praise for their selfless courage in facing the challenges of an imperfect world, their inspirational mission to improve it

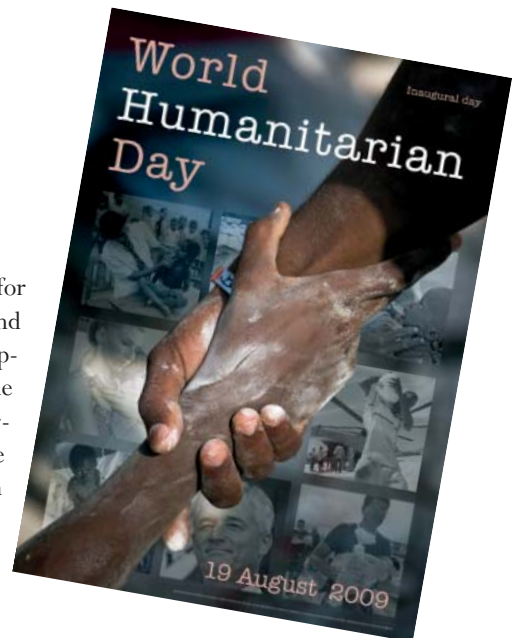
and their firm commitment to help ensure their safety and security in the line of duty. They provide life-saving assistance to millions of people around the world. They work in conflict zones and areas of natural hazards. They place their own lives at risk.

In the last decade, more than 700 humanitarian workers have made the ultimate sacrifice while striving to help those most in need in some of the world’s most hostile environments. Thousands more have endured bombings, kidnappings, attacks, hijackings, robberies and rapes.

Why choosing 19 August? Six years ago, on that particular day in 2003, the United Nations office in Iraq was bombed and 22 people lost their lives. Among them was Sergio Vieira de Mello, at that time the UN’s High

Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Iraq. While there have been many other fatal incidents involving humanitarian personnel, the General Assembly decided to use the anniversary of this incident as the World Humanitarian Day.

“Like Sergio and the other brave colleagues who lost their lives on that terrible day, humanitarian personnel venture to troubled regions to help others. For them, there can be no such thing as a forgotten conflict. But to do that noble work -- to face down threats amid disaster and war -- they need our help. They



need us to work tirelessly for their safety, security and independence.” Ban added. “World Humanitarian Day is meant to shine a spotlight on people in need, to ensure they receive the assistance they deserve. Let us redouble our efforts toward this goal. Let us fulfill our humanitarian imperative.” ■

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