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Launching of the World Investment Report 2008

The UN Information Centre in Beirut (UNIC-Beirut) organized on Thursday 9 October 2008 a press conference at the UN House-Beirut to launch The World Investment Report 2008 (WIR 2008) issued by the Geneva-based United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Key speakers of the conference were Mr. Ali Berro, Director of Quality Program at the Lebanese Ministry of Economy and Mr. Khaled Hussein, First Economic Affairs Officer at UN-ESCWA. The report's subtitle for 2008 is "Transnational Corporations and the Infrastructure Challenge".

Berro commented on the status of the Arab region and Lebanon concerning the current world economic crisis, saying it was still very early to determine the complete and final toll and effects of this crisis on our region as a whole, and on Lebanon in particular. "But it is possible to say that the Arab oil producing countries, namely those with a lot of investments in US financial markets, might bear a more negative toll than other countries. As for Lebanon, it will probably be less affected than other countries, as a result of



its small economy and limited stock exchange activity," Berro said.

On the subject of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), to which the WIR gives great importance, Berro said "If we revert to the 2007 WIR on the climate of investment in Arab countries, we find that Lebanon witnessed growth in investments and Arab capitals by approximately 4 percent, reaching almost 2845 million in 2007. But Lebanon maintained its fourth position among the Arab countries in attracting investments in 2007 compared to 2006, after ranking third in 2005, second in 2004 and first in 2003".

In his address, Hussein said "FDI in the Arab countries continued to increase in

2007, reaching USD\$72.4 billion, with a 17% growth rate compared with 2006. He said that Saudi Arabia ranked first with the FDI reaching USD\$24.3 billion in 2007, up 33% from 2006. The United Arab Emirates came second with FDI at USD\$13.3 billion, Egypt third with FDI USD\$11.6 billion and Lebanon fourth with FDI USD\$ 2.8 billion".

Each year, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) publishes its World Investment Report (WIR), which presents the most recent statistics on foreign direct investment (FDI) around the globe and regionally, and analyses this data as it applies to economic development. ■

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UN-ESCWA Publications



Compendium of Environment Statistics in the ESCWA Region

"The Compendium of Environment Statistics in the ESCWA Region" seeks to set a framework for compiling environment statistics for the Western Asia region undertaken by UN-ESCWA in close collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division and the United Nations Environment Programme. The Compendium aims at strengthening the capacity of member countries. Following a framework of



UN-ESCWA Publications (Cont.)

environment indicators, it compiles existing environmental data, calculates indicators related to the envi-

ronment, addresses gaps in data and priority issues, and builds on information to increase coverage in the data

collection process. This Compendium is mainly intended to assist people in the fields of statistics, environ-

ment and policymaking to develop a system for collecting environment statistics. ■

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

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases

Tuberculosis Prevalence rate (per 100,000 population)

Tuberculosis (TB) remains a significant public health problem, and is probably the leading cause of communicable disease deaths in adults in the Arab region. The TB burden is assessed by three indicators, namely, the rate of incidence, prevalence and mortality, each measured per 100,000 people. It is estimated that in 2005, 240,000 people in the Arab region developed TB and 43,000 died from it, corresponding to incidence and mortality rates of 75 and 13 per 100,000, respectively. The average prevalence rate in the region fell by 27 per cent since 1990 to 107 per 100,000. More than 70 per cent of cases and deaths occurred among 25- to 54-year-olds, who are usually the breadwinners; thus, their disease sub-

stantially affects the family income. TB, therefore, presents a developmental, as well as a public health, challenge.

TB and HIV

A close link between TB and HIV has been well established. HIV has abetted the incidence and spread of TB, which today is the most common cause of death in AIDS patients. Since the HIV epidemic has been expanding in some Arab countries, particularly LDCs, it is increasingly crucial to monitor the prevalence of both diseases in the same patients.

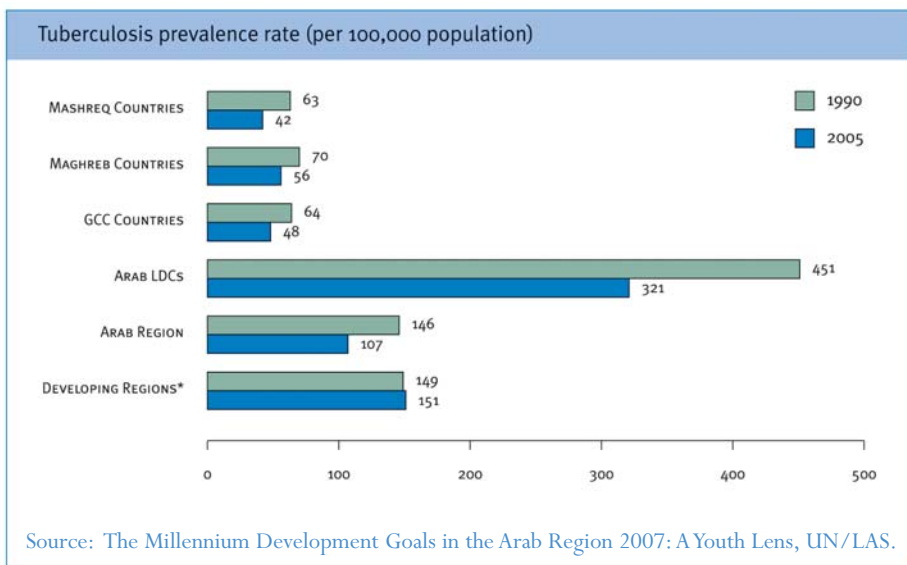
Youth

The youth is not the age group most affected by TB, since the disease affects

predominantly adults aged between 25 and 54 years old. However, epidemiologically, young people are particularly important as they will soon enter the age group that faces the highest risk. Improved awareness among young people is therefore of crucial importance, particularly in countries where HIV/AIDS is increasingly becoming a key determinant of TB.

Progress with DOTS

Most Arab countries have made good progress in TB control. Care based on the Directly Observed Treatment Short course (DOTS), the internationally recommended strategy for TB control, has been widely expanded to encompass, on average, more than 90 per cent of the general population. In addition, the regional treatment success rate under DOTS reached around 82 per cent in 2003, only three percentage points below the global target of 85 per cent. On the whole, the TB burden, namely, prevalence, incidence and mortality, has been reduced in the Arab region, in part as a result of the expansion of DOTS, coupled with good treatment outcomes. However, the reduction process has not been rapid enough to halt and reverse the spread of TB, or to halve its prevalence by 2015. ■



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