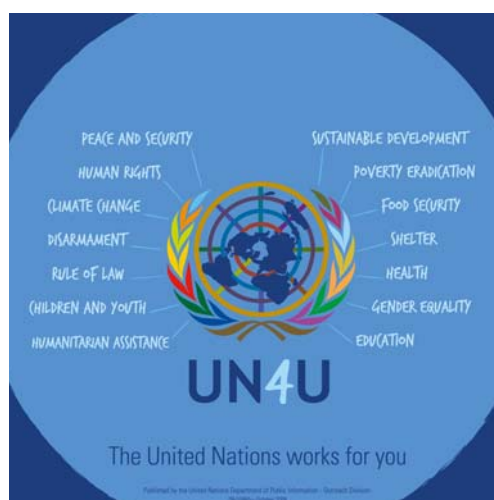




# The UN Celebrates 63rd Anniversary



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On the occasion of the 63rd anniversary of the United Nations, a series of public events were organized in Lebanon during the week of 24 October 2008 that were attended by high-ranking UN officials, as well as political, diplomatic, economic, cultural and media dignitaries.

A reception was organized that was characterized by the participation of a group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector institutions, as well as fifty cooperatives concerned with

agriculture, crafts and women affairs from the various Lebanese regions. They showcased their products that included traditional Lebanese cuisine and craftwork in cooperation with "Souk Al-Tayeb". The participation of cooperatives and other NGOs intended to demonstrate the magnitude of the existing cooperation between the world body and this segment of the Lebanese society and to support the ongoing efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the UN in 2000.

Also on this day, the Foreign Affairs Directorate at the International Association of Lions Clubs-District 351 (Lebanon-Jordan-Iraq) held an official ceremony, which featured key statements by the UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon, the UNIFIL Force Commander and the UN-ESCWA Executive Secretary. For its part, UNIFIL also observed UN Day by awarding certificates of recognition to Lebanese staff members who have served for more than 25 years with the peacekeeping mission.

A good exposure of the UN activities was ensured for the occasion as well by the print and audiovisual media in coordination with the UN Communication Group in Lebanon. A number of success stories were published in the media, as well as interviews with UN spokespersons. The media also highlighted the message of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the booklet entitled "60 Ways the UN Makes a Difference", which revolves around UN priority issues. ■

## The Doha Declaration: A Regional Partnership for Road Safety

UN-ESCWA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior of the Government of Qatar, the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) and Shell called for a workshop on "Establishing the Arab Mashreq Road Safety Partnership, on 21 - 22 October, 2008 in Doha, Qatar. Answering the call were 150 participants representing UN-ESCWA member countries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and more than 20 top private businesses in the region.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Director of the Traffic and Patrol Department at the Interior Ministry Brigadier Mohamed Saad

Al Kharji said that road safety represents a challenge that all societies face. Similarly, all countries seek the right solutions that help in controlling traffic accidents and subsequent catastrophic consequences effectively.

For his part, UN-ESCWA First Economic Affairs Officer Bassam Anani stressed in his address to the meeting that UN-ESCWA grants special importance to the subject of road safety, for the grave human losses road accidents incur, most of which are felt in youth circles, the category that is most able to give in society. Anani added that



## The Doha Declaration: A Regional Partnership for Road Safety (Cont.)



road accidents also leave economic consequences estimated at 1 to 2 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Participants discussed progress in regional road safety management and achievements; and regional requirements for road safety. Following lengthy discussions, the meeting adopted a key declaration baptized "the Doha Declaration", launching a regional partnership on road safety, which is a 'centre of excellence' to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and synchronize road safety efforts throughout the region. Participants also agreed to form a task force to follow-up the meeting's recommendations. ■

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

### Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

#### Energy Use per US\$ 1,000 GDP

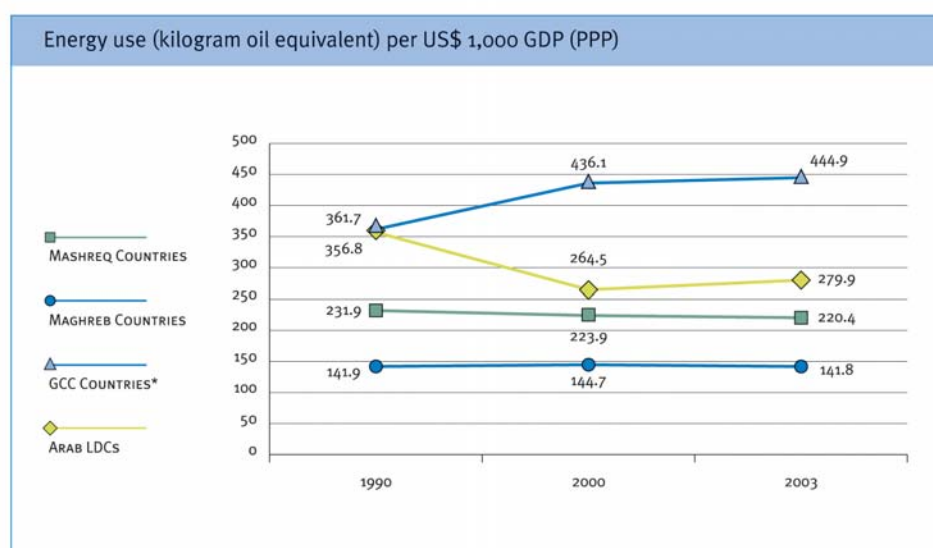
Rapidly expanding populations, rural-urban migration and widespread subsidies have contributed to a rising demand for energy in the Arab world since 1990. On average, energy consumption per US\$ 1,000 GDP<sup>49</sup> increased by 10 per cent between 1990 and 2003. While the Mashreq and Arab Least Developed Countries (LCDs) witnessed decreases of 5 per cent and 22

per cent, respectively, energy consumption per US\$ 1,000 GDP in the GCC countries rose by 23 per cent. The Maghreb sub-region maintained a constant average level over the same period.

In general, countries of the region have recently elevated efforts towards enhancing the sustainability of the energy sector. Sev-

eral countries have partly switched to natural gas and are upgrading oil refineries, improving fuel specifications, and adopting vehicle inspection and maintenance programmes. Renewable energy development has been another focus, particularly in rural and remote areas. Conserving energy and achieving efficiency in the various economic sectors are also priority issues, and integration projects on electricity grid inter-connection and gas distribution have been implemented.

Despite such efforts, there remains an urgent need for policies and strategies that expand accessibility and further develop sustainability, especially in remote and rural areas. Investments should be enhanced in oil and gas exploration and production activities; the use of cleaner technologies and of natural gas in the power and transport sectors should be encouraged; energy production and consumption efficiency should be upgraded; and renewable energy technologies should be developed and their application promoted. Furthermore, developed countries are requested to adopt stable regulations concerning additional tasks on fossil fuels that could reduce the negative impact on the producing countries. ■



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

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