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Technical Committee Convenes Second Meeting



Investing in people, food security, women-empowering legislation, and expanding studies on unemployment and youth, were among the conclusions of the second UN-ESCWA Technical Committee meeting, held on 3-4 November 2008 at the UN House.

The agenda of the meeting featured key issues, some being internal and related to the UN-ESCWA work program while others relate to hot world issues, such as the food crisis, and the global financial crisis. Participants, who comprised ambassadors of member countries and high-level delegates, discussed the work programme for the biennium 2010-2011; the activities of the Secretariat; the follow-up of the UN-ESCWA 25th ministerial session; a proposal for a regional conference for Western Asia in preparation for the 2009 Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and

Social Council (ECOSOC); and coordination between UN-ESCWA and the League of Arab States (LAS) on the unified text for the multimodal transport agreement among Arab countries. Discussions also included the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, which UN-ESCWA Executive Secretary, Bader Omar AlDafa, underlined, calling on member countries to take part in it. AlDafa stressed the importance of a high-level representation of these countries in the conference, to be held on 29 November- 2 December in Doha, with "a unified stand that clearly portrays their development priorities, namely in view of the big-scale events saddling the world on the financial level, and which may bring about adverse consequences on available resources to finance development".

Alongside AlDafa, the inaugural session also witnessed a statement by Muhammad Ahmad Hawiri, Deputy Minister in the Yemeni Ministry of the Planning and Technical Cooperation- Department of Economic Studies and Forecast. In his address, Hawiri praised UN-ESCWA development efforts at the service of member countries, considering that the second meeting of the Technical Committee comes within "exceptional regional and international conditions, which were the successive crises, beginning with the food and energy crisis, followed by the global financial crisis that is leaving its traces on the financing and credit sectors... this crisis is



The Technical Committee

The Technical Committee was established pursuant to the decision of the UN-ESCWA 24th session (Beirut, 8-11 May 2006). The aim behind it was to enhance interaction and close consultation between the members of the Commission and its secretariat on substantive development issues. The sessions of the Technical Committee are held every six months, starting January 2008, and its membership comprises high-level senior officials designated by the member governments of the Commission.

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UN-ESCWA Publications



Economic Trends and Impacts, Issue No. 4 Foreign Aid and Development in the Arab Region

A comprehensive assessment of the relationship between foreign aid and development in the Arab Region over the last three decades, this study defines the major trends in development assistance to Arab countries, offering a detailed analysis of the cases of Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Yemen. It assesses the connection between aid and development, reviews the relationship be-



Technical Committee Convenes Second Meeting (Cont.)

likely to continue in the foreseeable future and poses new challenges that require the international community and active organizations to look into more stable rules and mechanisms that could protect the economies of developing countries from such shocks".

The meeting concluded with a set of recommendations, including considering food security as one of the

concerns of UN-ESCWA; intensifying the Commission's capacity-building activities; coordinating with LAS on the youth-targeted strategy, and expanding studies on unemployment and youth to include such angles as liberties and social security; proposing to analyze the effect of foreign investment on employment and looking into UN-ESCWA's role in trade facilitation; expanding the scope of the program on the impact of

conflict over development to include the repercussions of occupation, disasters and emerging crises, and allow countries who desire to do so to benefit of the peaceful co-existence and social cohesion project; supporting national machineries for women; and asserting the finalization of the unified text for the multi-modal transport agreement among Arab countries, a result of the cooperation between UN-ESCWA and LAS. ■

UN-ESCWA Publications (Cont.)

tween development aid and economic growth, and identifies social development indicators in Arab countries, concluding with a set of policy recommendations aimed at increasing the effectiveness of development aid in the region. ■

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

Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

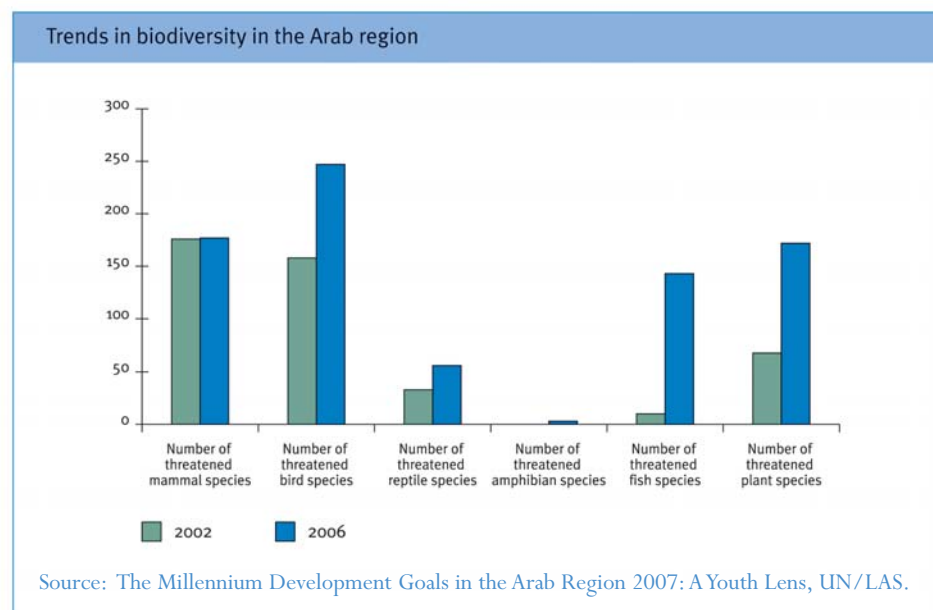
Trends in biodiversity in the Arab region

Biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use rely on integrating conservation with economic development and on ensuring that benefits of biodiversity are equitably shared. In the Arab region, biodiversity assessment programmes are weak or non-existent. Although all Arab

countries, with the exception of Iraq and Somalia, have ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity, and initiated numerous activities, more concerted efforts are needed to establish an integrated approach to biodiversity conservation, ecosystem management and pro-

tected areas in order to ensure the conservation of species, ecosystems and the genetic resources of the region.

The rich and diversified genetic heritage of the region is highly endangered. Available data show that the total number of known animal species in the Arab region was 13,164 in 2006, 5 per cent of which are threatened with extinction. At a species level, 9 per cent of mammals, 3 per cent of birds, 5 per cent of reptiles, 4 per cent of amphibians and 8 per cent of fish species are threatened, as illustrated in figure 2.7.4. The trends in biodiversity loss in the Arab region are alarming; the number of birds and reptiles species threatened with extinction doubled between 2002 and 2006, and the number of fish species increased 14 times. Such trends can be attributed to a combination of factors that exhibit cascade effects, including land use, climate change, invasive species, overexploitation, pollution, destruction and fragmentation of ecosystems resulting from wars, construction projects, industrial pollution and oil spills. ■



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