



Regional UN Agencies Meet at ESCWA to Reinforce Coordination



The Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) and the Regional Directors Team (RDT) of the United Nations bodies in the Arab world agreed in a two-day meeting at the UN House on the need to collaborate in preparing for the upcoming Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Summit. The meeting, which was opened by Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro and held on 3-4 November in Beirut, also stressed the importance of the UN's partnership with the League of Arab States (LAS), the African Union, the UN Country Teams and National Governments.

"We all appreciate that the objective of the RCM is mainly to achieve policy coherence and create synergy at the regional and sub-regional levels to improve the impact of our work," Migiro told participants at the meeting that was convened by ESCWA. "What unites us is our commitment to the right of all children, women and men to live full and dignified lives, with the opportunity and freedom to realize their full potential," she added.

ESCWA Executive Secretary Bader Al Dafa, for his part, highlighted the critical time in the run-

up to the 2010 MDGs Summit, especially that merely five years remained to the 2015 deadline for achieving these goals. "This is the time to take stock of our progress so far, and to put together a coordinated plan for the future," he said.

Al Dafa warned that the region and the globe are going through critical times. "The rise in poverty and hunger, the depletion of natural resources, and the volatile effects of climate change are grave challenges to human, economic and social development," he said.

The meeting was attended by the regional directors and senior representatives of UN agencies, and the Lebanese Minister of Education and Higher Education Bahiya Hariri.

A joint closing statement delivered by Al Dafa, and Chair of the RDT Amat Al Alim Alsoswa, which included the recommendations of the meeting, focused on three thematic areas: the Millennium Declaration and MDGs; food security and climate change, and youth. ■

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ESCWA Celebrates 35th Anniversary with Lebanese Painters



As part of its series of events to mark its 35th Anniversary, ESCWA opened a public exhibition to honor pioneer Lebanese artists and painters on 2 November. To the notes of Caccini's "Ave Maria," sung by Lebanese Tenor Edgard Aoun, the regional commission inaugurated the exhibit to showcase some of the most illustrious works of 19 painters. Surrounded by high Lebanese officials representing the Prime Minister, House Speaker, Prime Minister designate

ESCWA Celebrates 35th Anniversary with Lebanese Painters (Cont.)



and in the presence of diplomats, artists and socialites, ESCWA Executive Secretary Bader AlDafa and Lebanese Minister of Culture Tammam Salam, representing the Lebanese President, cut the ribbon at the UNESCO-held show.

“ESCWA is keen on having a hand in encouraging the cultural scene in the region, as is it committed to its economic and social missions.” AlDafa said in the opening. “ESCWA is honored by this crowd of pioneer Lebanese artists whose works served to preserve



Lebanon’s position in the regional and international cultural scenes. This exhibition is one of the many forms of multiculturalism, and is a cultural expression that is by no means less significant than development projects in the economic and social spheres.”

Salam, for his part, commended AlDafa and ESCWA’s efforts to pay tribute to Lebanese artists. “This collection of creative paintings and works is the best representation of Lebanese glory,” he said. ■

ESCWA Committee Promotes Integrated Social Policies



ESCWA Committee on Social Development has met and agreed to strengthen member countries’ implementation of public policies and adopt an integrated social policy. The Committee, which convened its seventh session, has met under the auspices of Lebanese Minister of Social Affairs Mario Aoun.

The session’s deliberations focused on the progress achieved in the implementation of social development activities included in the ESCWA work programme, and the proposed programme for the 2010-2011 period. The agenda featured reports on the priority issues in the field of social development,

such as social inclusion, participatory social development and youth in social policies.

Participants in the session were representatives of 12 member countries, who worked for two days alongside representatives of UN organizations and specialized agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and donors. They concluded their deliberations by recommending collaboration among governments, civil society organizations, the private sector and media institutions. Emphasis was placed as well on the complementarity of social development sectors, plans, programs and projects. ■

Arab Forum on Social Policy Garners Momentum and Support

Back to back with the seventh session on social development, ESCWA held the *Arab Forum on Social Policy*, on 28 and 29 October, in partnership with the Community Development Authority in the Government of Dubai (UAE). The forum was meant to promote member countries’ commitment to integrated social policy by raising awareness of the normative framework and the practical tools.

Participants heard about lessons learned from different countries – both within and beyond Western Asia – that have sought to integrate and mainstream social dimensions in economic policy. Case studies from Norway, Ireland, Malaysia, Jordan and Egypt - among others - were presented juxtaposing the different models in social policy planning, implementation and monitoring. Real solutions can only be home-grown, but it is critical that we learn the lessons of other developed and developing countries, one participant said.

Participants also had the chance to browse through the publications and audio-visual material of different government offices, UN agencies as well as researchers and institutes during a knowledge fair on the sidelines of the meeting. “The fair is an attempt to engage participants outside the meeting room, creating space for interactions, networking, and the opportunity to learn about the breadth of work of other partners,” said Social Affairs Officer Ramla Khalidi, who helped organize the Forum. ■

Address

P.O. Box 11-8575, Riad El-Solh, Beirut-Lebanon
 Tel.: 961-1-981301; Fax: 961-1-981510
 e-mail: webmaster-escwa@un.org
 website: www.escwa.un.org