

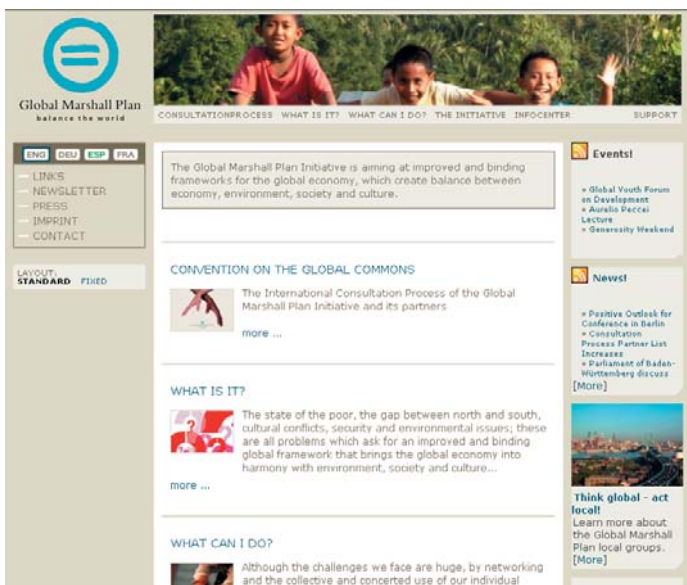


UN-ESCWA Weekly News

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Commitment to Global Issues



The UN-ESCWA Executive Secretary, Mr. Bader Omar AlDafa stressed the United Nations' commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), by 2015. He also spoke of the need to reach a fair trade system, and achieve sustainable development, in addition to protect the environment, and fight environmental dangers such as global warming. AlDafa highlighted as well the need for the active participation of youth in the global dialogue and for bridging the digital divide, and promoting security, development and peace worldwide.

The above-mentioned points were included in the address AlDafa gave at the Conference on the International Consultation Process, organized by the Global Marshall Plan Initiative between 4 and 6 March in Berlin, Germany. Participants in the meeting included interna-

tional officials, academicians, and representatives of international research centers.

AlDafa spoke in his address of the strategic relationship between the UN and the Global Marshall Plan, and of common points between both of them such as working towards the MDGs, promoting sustainable

development and protecting the environment. He also touched upon the need to redouble efforts to reach these goals, while placing specific emphasis on countries with special needs, such as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and those in conflict, and to provide them with required technical and humanitarian assistance. AlDafa tackled the need to support developing countries' efforts to improve access to the markets of developed countries, thus aiding them through trade and globalization. He affirmed the importance of using environmentally sound technologies in the South, and of increasing South-South cooperation to reach environment-friendly sustainable development. AlDafa further affirmed the need for youth participation in all global dialogues that lead to putting plans to fight global issues, in addition to the necessity of putting an end to conflicts in all countries, through intensifying regional and international policy efforts. ■

Global Marshall Plan is an initiative born from the acknowledgement of the interdependence of global problems as well as of the people and groups that can solve them. It provides a platform through which civil society organizations, governments and businesses from all around the world join to create a common global agenda, which fights global troubles and predicaments. The Global Marshall Plan Initiative and its partners are launching in 2008 a global consultation process that aims to launch talks between a large number of individuals and organizations to establish an action plan that could influence multilateral economic policies, as well as the UN Summit on the Environment, which could be held in 2012.

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Caution is Safety

Road accidents are among the main and most common causes of death. According to a 2003 UN report, traffic-resulting injuries are expected to rank third worldwide by 2020. Accident-incurred damages spread beyond the directly concerned parties, (whether the direct accountable or injured), because they reflect negatively upon society as a whole, by crippling the capacities of individuals and their families, and lead to a social and economic disorder and waste of resources, in addition to damages to private and public property.

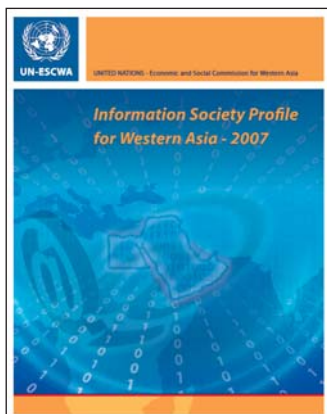
The Need for Awareness

The two-part UN-ESCWA study on this level, entitled "An Overview of Road Safety in Selected Countries from



UN-ESCWA Committed to Establishing the Information Society in the Region

UN-ESCWA is implementing a series of activities pertaining to the directives of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), including the publication of a study entitled "Regional Profiles of the Information Society in Western Asia", to present the current state of affairs and assess progress in building the information society in the region. The third issue of this publication came out recently. The study defines the information society as the one in which information is used efficiently in the economic and social development process, and which is based on producing information locally, transferring it among countries, adjusting it and using it for purposes of development, improving the quality of life and the work environment for all citizens. To reach the information society, advanced Information and Communication Technologies must be used. This is a primary, albeit insufficient, condition, since it is also necessary to develop appropriate capacities in a number of different economic, social, legal, education and research fields. The study also tackles the role of governments and media, as well as international and regional cooperation in this field. It also highlights the maturity level of UN-ESCWA countries in reaching the MDGs, alongside other issues. ■



Caution is Safety (Cont.)

the ESCWA region", found that the economic cost of road accidents is estimated at 1% of the GDP in low-income countries, 1.5% in middle-income countries (which equals 65 billion US dollars, and constitutes more than these countries receive in development aid) and 2% in high-income countries. It is well known that most Middle Eastern countries face the dilemma of road accidents that top those in developed countries. The study, which dealt with UN-ESCWA member countries, found that the need was great to improve drivers' training and testing. Awareness and education programs on road safety are also deficient and lack clear planning. The study also featured road safety legislation in member countries, specific procedures for driving tests, drivers' licenses, and road accidents, in addition to recommendations for improving the safety level. ■

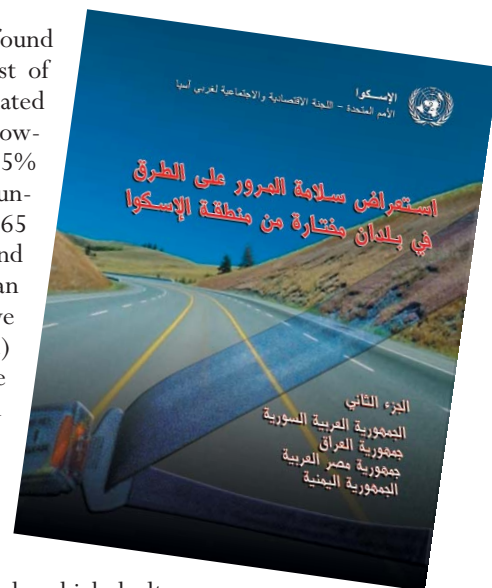
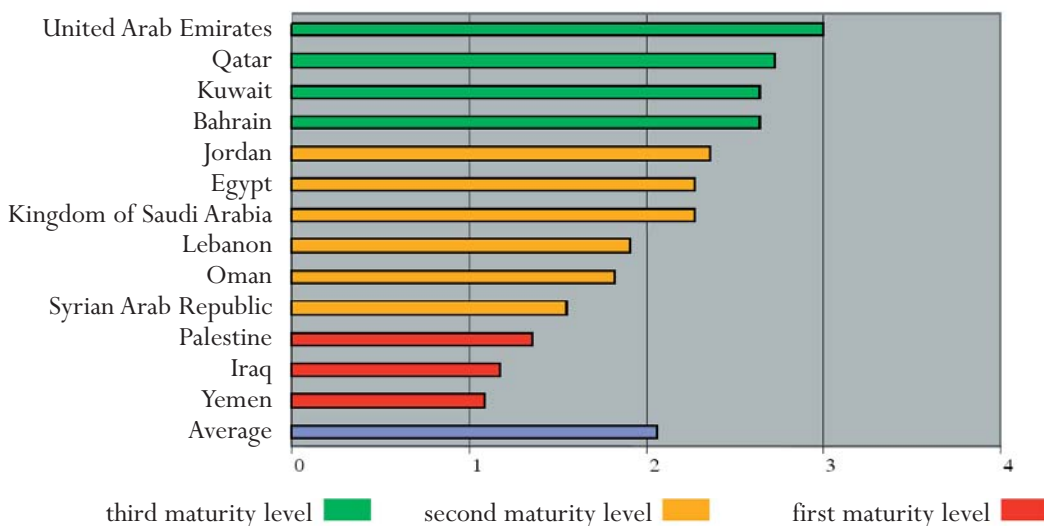


Figure 1. Ranking of ESCWA member countries according to maturity level in Information Society



Source: The Regional Profile of the Information Society in Western Asia, 2007

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