



Signing an Agreement with Yemen on Hosting the Ministerial Session



On 7 April 2008, the UN-ESCWA Executive Secretary, Mr. Bader Omar AlDafa, and the Ambassador of Yemen Republic in Lebanon, Mr. Fayssal Amin Abu Ras, representing the Yemeni Government, signed the agreement on the special arrangements for the UN-ESCWA 25th Ministerial Session, to be held on 26-29 May in Sana'a. The signing ceremony was attended by Mr. Khaled Galal AbdelHamid, the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. David Iyamah, the UN-ESCWA Chief of the Administrative Service Division, and Mr. Muhammad Abdul Razzak, Chief of the Program Planning and Technical Cooperation Division. Attendees on the Yemeni side included the Officer in Charge of the Embassy in Beirut, Mr.

Ahmad Hussein BaSaddiq, the Advisor and Officer in Charge of UN-ESCWA Affairs at the Embassy, Mr. Hussein Ariani, as well as senior officials of the Embassy.

Following the signing ceremony, AlDafa pointed out in response to a question on the reason for holding the Session outside Lebanon, that the choice of Sana'a to host the Ministerial Session came as a response to an invitation by the Yemeni Government, and this choice does not contradict United Nations provisions in any way.

For his part, Ambassador Abu Ras said that the first UN-ESCWA meeting was held in Yemen, over 20 years ago, when the late Muhammad Saeed Al

Attar (Yemen) was the Commission's Executive Secretary. Yemen also looks ahead to integrate the region's economies, and UN-ESCWA is the best way to start this path. Abu Ras added that the solutions for main issues lie in focusing on the economic facets and cooperation among different parties in the region. Responding to a question on the issues that will be discussed during the Session, especially in the difficult economic context on the global level in general and on the Arab level in particular, he said that this Session will open the horizon for cooperation between Yemen and the region as a whole, namely, as a first step, with countries of the Gulf. Yemen has requested of UN-ESCWA to supply it with studies and experts in the sectors of priority.

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AlDafa had made an official visit to Yemen between 7 and 11 March, in preparation for the UN-ESCWA 25th Ministerial Session, and met with the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and senior officials. He was also informed of the country's potential and its most pressing needs. Yemeni officials affirmed that both official and non-governmental institutions look with great pride toward holding the UN-ESCWA 25th Session in Sana'a, and that everyone awaits this event that will greatly contribute to the major efforts to achieve prosperity and sustainable human development in Yemen.

Pursuant to the agreement, the Yemeni government would provide all the facilitations to holding the Session, especially that it had sent an invitation to the UN-ESCWA Secretariat to hold the 25th Session in Yemen. UN-ESCWA member countries also welcomed this invitation. ■

On Sustainable Consumption and Production

The Federal Environment Authority in the United Arab Emirates hosted the first Expert Group Meeting in the Arab Region on "Sustainable Consumption and Production", co-organised by UN-ESCWA, the League of Arab States (LAS), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Secretariat of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development on 17-19 March in 2008, in Al-Ain.

The meeting aimed at identifying key regional priorities that will contribute to develop a regional action plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP); presenting ongoing initiatives on SCP; contributing to the 10-Year Framework of Programmes in the Marrakech on SCP; and building more coopera-

tion between the region and the Marrakech Task Forces, and other stakeholders.

Senior officials in the ministries of the environment, energy and water from UN-ESCWA member countries, as well as experts in these fields attended the meeting and discussed the Marrakech Process; SCP in the Arab region, and cleaner production, alongside relevant issues.

The meeting concluded with a series of notable recommendations, including: to mandate the Secretariat of the Arab Council of ministers in charge of environmental issues to prepare the draft Arab report on SCP, banking on the outcome of the meeting along the line of the Marrakech 10-Year framework of Programmes on



SCP, and in the context of the sustainable development initiative in the Arab region; to request of the Marrakech Process to examine the establishment of a working group on technology transfer in fields related to SCP, with emphasis on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), in the context of regional and international cooperation; to task UNEP and the UN Industrial Organization (UNIDO) with establishing an Arab network that connects na-

tional cleaner production centers in the Arab region to exchange experiences and support Arab decisions in the field of cleaner production; in addition to motivating Arab funding institutions to support SCP programs in the Arab region, with an insistence on the commitment of developed countries towards fulfilling their pledges in offering technical and financial support to developing countries, along with Arab countries, in implementing Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Action. ■

Strategies for Gender Statistics



Under the umbrella of the UN Development Group-Iraq Trust Fund (UNDG-ITF) funded project for "The Development of National Gender Statistics in Iraq", which UN-ESCWA is implementing in cooperation with the Iraqi Central Organization for

Statistics and Information Technology (COSIT), UN-ESCWA convened a workshop on the "Design of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics: Mainstreaming Gender in Sectoral Statistics" from 24 to 26 March 2008 in Istanbul, Turkey.

The project focuses as a whole on a number of capacity building activities, including training on concepts and methods for mainstreaming gender in all statistical work; and the development of a national statistical strategy that mainstreams gender in sectoral statistics. While this workshop is considered as part of an international effort to assist Arab countries in meeting international goals and standards in the area of statistics, and in improving their national official statistics in line with the Marrakech Plan of Action and the recommendations of the Third Regional Forum on Statistical Capacity Building for

the Arab Region held in April 2007, in Sana'a.

Statisticians from the Iraqi COSIT involved in the preparation of the country's statistical strategy attended the meeting, alongside statisticians from Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Participants were trained on the PARIS21 guidelines for the development of statistics and how to mainstream the gender perspective in sectoral statistics. They also shared their experiences, thereby fostering a platform for the sharing of lessons learned and good practices. ■

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