



UN-ESCWA Weekly News

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Working Towards Better Societies



On 10 July 2008, UN-ESCWA took part in a one-day brainstorming workshop jointly organized by the National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, Beirut. Ramlia Khalidi, First Social Affairs Officer at UN-ESCWA, spoke about the concept of integrated social policy and the three-tier framework to analyze social policy. She highlighted in particular the findings and conclusions of the upcoming Social Policy Report II: From Concept to Practice, and

touched upon some of the mechanisms and instruments of social policy that may be applicable to the countries of the UN-ESCWA region.

The meeting was held as part of the CNRS's efforts to bolster its research work in the field of social and human development. It brought together up to 40 researchers, experts and officials working in the social science field to brainstorm together on the challenges of social science research in Lebanon and ways of enhancing collaboration and coordination between the different research institutions and individuals. ■

IN THIS ISSUE

- Working Towards Better Societies
- A Tool for Effective Partnership
- UN-ESCWA Publications
- Facts and Figures

A Tool for Effective Partnership



Responding to member countries' urgent need to enhance their capacities in compiling, disseminating and exchanging data and metadata, UN-ESCWA organized a regional workshop on the use of the DevInfo statistical program, which facilitates exchanging unified official statistics to relevant agencies and the regional commission in the region. The meeting was held in partnership with the United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO), UN country Offices and the Statistical, Economic, and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTC), from 7 to 10 July 2008, at the UN House, Beirut, Lebanon.

"DevInfo" is a tool provides the statistical community with a tool for effective working partnership among different

data producers. It is designed to support governments in monitoring the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and can be adapted to include additional user-defined indicators that are linked to key national monitoring frameworks. This software offers a cost-free and effective solution to address the needs of UN agencies and national partners for information management system.

Burgeoning Connections

The meeting was the first of its kind to mainstream the use of DevInfo at the sectoral level. It succeeded in establishing partnerships among the National Statistical Offices and Health Ministries in member countries and opened communication channels to facilitate the exchange of information and dissemination of reliable and quality



UN-ESCWA Publications



Enhancing the Status of Women: A Continuous Commitment (Studies on Arab Women and Development- No. 35)

This study is part of the efforts of the UN-ESCWA Centre for Women to improve the performance of national committees on women and the relevant Arab ministries in mainstreaming gender into Government policies and programmes, and to follow up on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and subsequent conferences. The study provides a detailed analysis of the needs of those national committees and ministries, based on a survey. The study clarifies roles, jurisdictions and forms of cooperation and coordination at the government and non-governmental organizations levels in respect of reducing gender inequality. It includes discussion of the selected experiences of member countries in bridging the gender gap. The last section of the study offers guidelines for national committees on women and ministries for women's affairs on mainstreaming gender into policies, programmes and projects and in preparing future plans to achieve gender equality. ■

Source: UN-ESCWA Publications Catalogue (2006/2007).

A Tool for Effective Partnership (Cont.)

data through a unified tool. Participants received training on the new features and tools of the program. They also shared experiences gained and lessons learned in customizing and implementing it at the national level.

Recommendations to conclude the meeting focused on the need to: organize similar, frequent DevInfo workshops at the

sectoral level, due to their increasing benefit for participants; establish a Regional Team at UN-ESCWA in support of national efforts; establish a network for DevInfo users for exchange of experiences and information; and organize a follow up workshop focusing on improving health metadata and training on web facilities in the new version (to be released in December 2008). ■

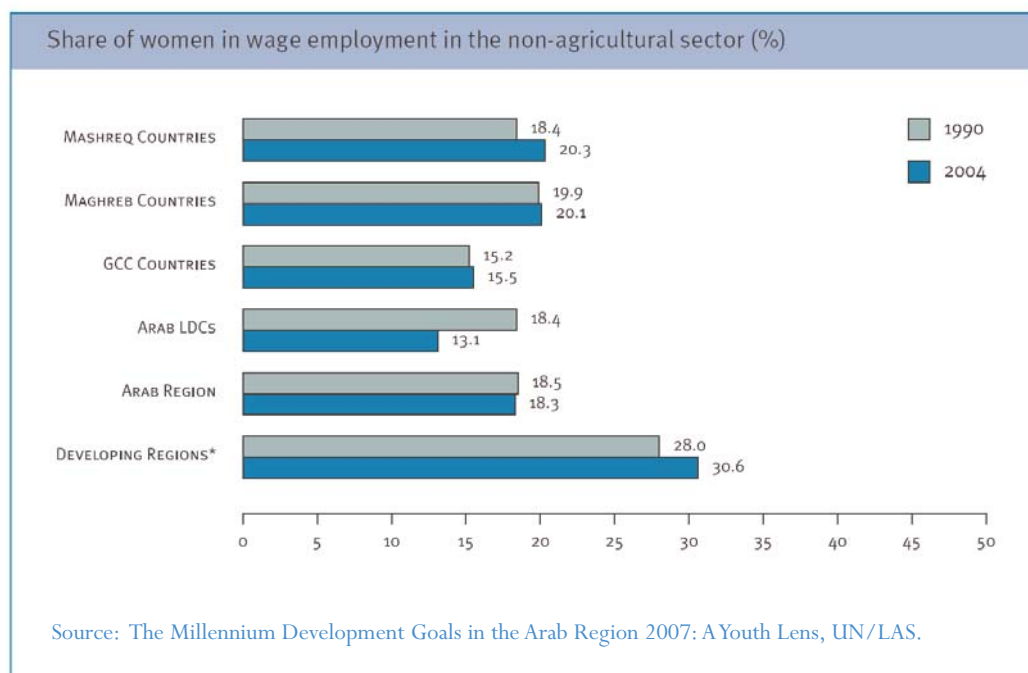


Facts and Figures: The Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region 2007

Third Goal: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Share of Women in Wage Employment in the Non-Agricultural Sector (%)

There is an interconnected matrix of legal educational, social, behavioral and economic factors that hinder the inclusion of Arab women in the labour market, and impede their participation in political decision-making. On the employment front, those factors have resulted in increased barriers, namely, wage and non-wage discrimination, unequal access to the market and lack of complete control over resources. In general, the social patriarchal structure in the region and the discriminatory legal framework play large roles in limiting women's control of and access to economic resources. Inheritance laws that restrict women's share in property are one example; another is legislation in some countries that prohibits women from concluding contracts in their own name. Therefore, Arab women are more likely than men to be engaged in informal sectors, for example selling products in local open-air markets or working on a family farm, which typically involves non-wage work or work under contracts that supply few benefits. ■



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