



UN-ESCWA Weekly News

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What's Ahead?

UN-ESCWA will participate during the coming period in a series of international and local meetings and conferences, including:

General Assembly Second Committee (Economic and Financial)

The General Assembly Second Committee, which deals with economic and financial issues, will focus in this year's session on issues relating to economic growth and development such as international trade, international financial system and debt, financing for development, sustainable development, human settlements, poverty eradication, globalization and interdependence, operational activities for development, and information and communication technologies for development. The Second Committee will also consider issues relating to Groups of Countries in special situations - such as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). It will also consider the item on permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources.

Meeting of the Council of Arab Transport Ministers, Arab Transport Forum

Al-Iktissad Wal-Aamal Group, in partnership with the Egyptian Ministry of Transport, and in cooperation with the League of Arab States and UN-ESCWA, is organizing "The

Arab Transport Forum" in Cairo, Egypt on October 29-30, 2008. The forum will be attended by most of the Arab Ministers of Transport and the leaders of the private sector companies, and held concomitantly with the meeting of the Council of Arab Transport Ministers.

Second Meeting of the UN-ESCWA Technical Committee

Established by the 24th UN-ESCWA Ministerial Session in 2006, the Technical Committee is composed of concerned senior officials from member countries. It aims to enhance interaction and consultation between the members of the Commission and the secretariat on important development issues, and advise the secretariat on follow-up to and implementation of Commission resolutions. The Committee holds its meeting this year on 3-4 November 2008, in Beirut.

Arab Businessmen Summit on Arab Economic Integration

Under the auspices of the Prince of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabbah, the General Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and Agriculture for Arab Countries (GUCCIAAC), the Economic Sector in the Secretariat of the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry hold the Arab Businessmen Summit on Arab Economic Integration on 11-12 November 2008, in Kuwait. The meeting will be a preparation for the Arab Economic Development and Social Summit, hosted by Kuwait early 2009.

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Financing For Development

In March 2002, the United Nations held the first International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico to consider new approaches to financing more equitable global development. The resulting Monterrey Consensus "resolved to address the challenges of financing for development" and "to eradicate poverty, achieve sustained economic growth and promote sustainable development." In 2007, the General Assembly decided that a "Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development" would be held in Doha, Qatar, in the second half of 2008 (November 29 - December 2). The meeting will review the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus. ■

UN-ESCWA Publications



Review of Information and Communication Technology for Development in Western Asia, issue No.9

UN-ESCWA published the ninth issue of its Review of Information and Communication Technology for Development in Western Asia. The current issue highlights regional information and communication initiatives and projects, initiated by several parties in the Arab world as a whole, and particularly in Western Asia. These initiatives promote regional integration projects in the Arab region on the cultural, social and economic levels. The issue also includes other articles that show UN-ESCWA activities in ICT during the first half of 2008, as well as the influence of such technology on our daily lives. ■

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

Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health

Maternal Mortality in the Arab Region (per 1,000 live births)

Reducing maternal and infant mortality requires universal access to reproductive health and rights. That is particularly important for young women, who face the highest risk and, yet, have the least access to reproductive health information and services. Two indicators have been selected to help track progress towards the target of reducing the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters between 1990 and 2015, namely, the maternal mortality rate (MMR) and the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel.

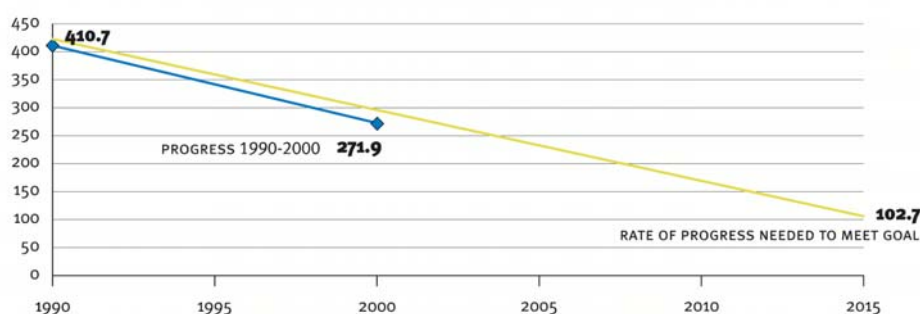
Average MMR in the Arab region fell to about 272 per 100,000 live births in 2000, a decrease of almost 34 per cent from its 1990 level of 411 per 100,000 live births. As such, the Arab region is on track in reducing maternal mortality by three quarters from its 1990 level by 2015. The decline in maternal mortality is linked to the significant increase in births attended by a skilled health professional. In fact, births attended by skilled health personnel have risen by over 16 percentage points from 1990 to 2000. There are great variations in the maternal mortality level among countries of the region, ranging from levels below 10 per 100,000 in some GCC countries, to around 1,600 per 100,000 live births in Somalia. The burden of maternal death in the Arab region is primarily carried by Arab LDCs and, to a lesser

extent, by Iraq and Morocco.

Countries of the region can be broadly classified into four groups: those countries where MMR was less than 100 per 100,000 live births in 2000, namely, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates; those where MMR ranged from 140 to 370 per 100,000 live births, namely, Algeria, Morocco, Iraq and Yemen; those where MMR ranged from 400 to 600 per 100,000 live births, namely, the Comoros, Djibouti and the Sudan; and those where MMR was above 1,000 per 100,000 live births, namely, Mauritania and Somalia.

The reduction in maternal mortality in the Arab region is in part attributed to the reduction in adolescent pregnancy, which is associated with high risks. Indeed, adolescents aged 15 to 19 are twice as likely to die during childbirth, and those under 15 are five times as likely to die during childbirth as women in their twenties. However, families are undergoing major changes as new patterns of marriage and family formation emerge across the region. Early marriage is no longer the standard it once was in Arab countries. ■

Maternal mortality in the Arab region (per 1,000 live births)



Source: The Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region 2007: A Youth Lens, UN/LAS.

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