



Project Wins Against All Odds

The UNESCWA / Cisco Networking Academy Iraq Project has been selected as the "Against all Odds" winner. The award will be presented during the Cisco Academy Conference 2005 in Valencia, Spain, on 8 September. The award recognizes the UNESCWA contribution to the success of the Networking Academy Program in light of the difficult conditions in Iraq.

This project involves setting up 4 regional academies that include training programs for trainers at universities in Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra as well as the Mansour University College. Training has already begun in 3 of the 4 colleges. The project covers the establishment of 40 local networking academies, training of 1000 trainers on the establishment and management of networking technology, creation of a partnership with Cisco Systems International which has offered in-kind support for the project to the tune of \$1.28 million, and providing program graduates with access to the job market. Each university has assumed responsibility for establishing 10 local networking academies at selected institutes and colleges to bring the total number of Networking Academies at the end of the project to 44 in a time period of 36 months. UNESCWA has secured funding to establish these academies, equip them with the necessary equipment and connect them online with the Iraq Development Fund in coordination with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

The Cisco curriculum is a comprehensive network training program that gives students Internet and networking skills. The academic curriculum is provided online and participants are evaluated directly. The program supplies instructors and laboratory experiments that are in line with international industrial standards and specifications and grants specifically related certificates.

UNESCWA and Regional Preparations for WSIS

UNESCWA is participating in regional preparations for the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information

Society (WSIS) to be held in Tunis this November. In this context, Mr. Mansour Farah, UNESCWA Senior Technology Officer and Team Leader of WSIS, and Ms. Nibal Idlebi, Information Technology Officer at UNESCWA, took part in the 19th meeting of the Arab Working Group tasked with preparations ahead of the WSIS that was held in Damascus from 1 to 3 August 2005. The meeting resulted in a document providing the Arab position with respect to the main issues for negotiation at the international level, mainly: implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action adopted in phase one of WSIS 2004, financing mechanisms for bridging the digital divide, Internet governance (IG) and the phase following WSIS Tunis. UNESCWA contributed to the discussions through clarifying several points related to these issues, principally the issue of IG.

The declared position of UNESCWA on this issue has been reiterated, particularly the importance of establishing an international mechanism for IG, which is linked to the United



Nations, since the Internet has become a global network needed by all countries in their daily transactions and constitutes a vast reservoir of information, permitting sharing of knowledge and serving socio-economic development.

The participants adopted the first model proposed by the Working Group on IG, established by the United Nations Secretary General, in his report published in June 2005. This model calls for the establishment of a Global Internet Council (GIC), with appropriate representation from each region, supervising the Internet Commission for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). This Council should set international Internet public policies, provide guidance on certain developmental issues in the broader Internet agenda, approve rules and procedures for dispute resolution and conduct arbitration. According to this

model, the GIC should be anchored in the United Nations and the governmental component should take a leading role; with the private sector and civil society participating in an advisory capacity.

Bees and Employment in South Lebanon



As part of the implementation of the ILO project on "Employment Creation and Income Generation through the Development of Micro and Small Agro-Industries in South Lebanon", UNESCWA is currently executing a pilot project through assisting a cluster of 12 beekeepers in the Bint Jbeil area in improving production, extraction, packaging and marketing of different types of honey.

The cluster brought together the beekeepers with an exemplary apiary of 120 hives. The project provides training and practical demonstrations to the participants of the pilot project as well as 20 other beekeepers from the region. In doing so, the pilot project contributes to improving the productivity, competitiveness and working conditions of beekeepers in the South. The first harvest has started and honey is now being marketed.



Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the UN-ESCWA Region 2005

Facts and Figures - Sustainable Development Issues

- Natural resource crisis conditions prevail particularly with respect to water, land and energy. The main factors impeding the sustainable development of water are chronic scarcity, deteriorating quality and unsustainable water utilization, especially in agriculture.
- Cultivated land resources comprise a mere 5% of the total land area, representing 22 million hectares of land, with very limited scope for expansion.
- For land resources, more than 90% of land in the region is hyper-arid or desert, while the remaining area is classified as "dry".
- Land degradation is a major threat with some 73% of the land being lightly to very severely degraded as the result of overgrazing, wind and water erosion, the inefficient use of water resources and political tensions.
- The region has access to tremendous conventional and renewable energy resources. However, in addition to the likely depletion of such resources, prevailing energy production and consumption patterns in the region are inefficient, and some 20% of the population in rural and urban poor areas do not have adequate access to energy services, which hinders their development opportunities.

Upcoming Events

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| 22 Aug - 2 Sept 2005
Beirut, Lebanon | Management Skills Training for Senior Iraqi Government Officials from Erbil – Phase 1 |
| 1 September 2005
Beirut, Lebanon | Launch of first e-Forum on Modern Biotechnology; Technical and Policy Implications in the Near East and North Africa Region |

Lebanese Singer Joins Fight Against Hunger



The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) announced that Lebanese singer Assi Helani has added his voice to the growing roster of celebrities helping the UN food aid agency raise awareness about global hunger and poverty.

Popularly known as the "Arab Knight", Helani donated his voice to shoot the latest of WFP's 30-second Public Service Announcements (PSAs) in which he draws attention to the tragic fact that 25,000 people die from hunger every day, 18,000 of them children. "We cannot stop time, but we can stop hunger. And to help to end this tragedy, I am ready to donate my voice and popularity to the cause of fighting hunger and poverty. We must stop hunger in the world if we are all to have a better life," Helani said.

The PSA will be launched on Arab TV stations in the Middle East. An Egyptian advertising company, artists, musicians and a professional photographer also donated their services and skills for the PSA production.

New Publications

Population Policies in the Arab Countries: Reproductive Health Policies and Indicators

E/ESCWA/SDD/2005/Booklet.1

UNESCWA has published a report on "Population Policies in the Arab Countries: Reproductive Health Policies and Indicators."

The purpose of the National Convention for Population and Development that was held in Cairo in 1994 was to boost the quality-of-life level for the entire population by adopting policies and population and development programs appropriate to the UNESCWA region that will tend to extricate it from poverty and achieve economic development in the context of sustainable development. It also aimed at ensuring all human rights such as basic health care, education for all, and paying special attention to bridging the gender gap in elementary and secondary education.



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