



ESCWA Assists in Launching Arab Water Utilities Association

The Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA) was recently launched, and it was founded with the assistance of ESCWA and the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development through its Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ). At the launching ceremony in Amman, Jordan, light was shed on the uniqueness of ACWUA as a regional platform for exchanges on best practices among water and wastewater management utilities in the Arab region.

The celebration was held under the patronage of the Minister of Water and Irrigation of Jordan and was attended by over 80 high-ranking personalities from all over the Arab world and other countries. Participants included members of ACWUA's Board of Directors, heads of Arab water utilities, donor agencies, international organizations as well as experts and representatives from the private sector. The Secretary General of the new Association gave a detailed overview on the status of the new body.

A meeting of the Board of Directors followed the launching ceremony and resulted in taking many decisions, including the creation of working groups that will guide the substantive work of



ACWUA. Through these working groups, the Association will focus on the management of utilities, water resources management, water and health, utilities reform, benchmarking as well as capacity building and training.

ESCWA and GTZ, as well as other cooperating partners, asserted that they are committed to continuing their support to ACWUA as a Centre of Excellence in the Arab water sector. ■



IN THIS ISSUE:

- ESCWA Assists in Launching Arab Water Utilities Association
- ESCWA Devises Work Plan for Climate Change
- International Migration Statistics

ESCWA Devises Work Plan for Climate Change

In view of the dramatic impact climate change will have on water resources in the Arab region, according to world reports, the Arab Integrated Water Resources Management Network, which is hosted by ESCWA, held in Beirut the first meeting of its Climate Change Working Group (CCWG).

The CCWG, whose members hail from around the Arab region and are all experts in climate change and its effects on water, was established to produce concrete outputs on linkages between climate change and the management of integrated water resources. [↪](#)

ESCWA Devises Work Plan for Climate Change (Cont.)

The meeting, which was sponsored by the German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources, developed a three-point work plan for the Working Group's first year of operation from 2009 to 2010. The plan includes first a review of the literature and identification of gaps on the vulnerability of water resources to climate change in the Arab region. The review will benefit water experts and the executive summary targets policymakers and the general public. It will be completed by mid-2010.

Secondly, an analysis of a Copenhagen treaty and its effects on water in the Arab region will be developed. It will consist of a policy brief aimed at experts in the field and an executive summary aimed at policymakers and the media. It will be completed by early 2010, contingent on a treaty being agreed upon in Copenhagen.

Thirdly, a roster of Arab experts on climate change and water resources will be developed by the third quarter of 2010. The roster will be a searchable index of experts that details their professional experiences and areas of expertise.

The urgency to act on climate change is made evident by the upcoming negotiations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to be held in Copenhagen from 7-18 December 2009, and by the mounting scientific evidence of the effects of climate change on the planet. In a region already typified by an arid climate and water scarcity, the UNFCCC reports that climate change will likely have a dramatic impact on water resources.

During the two-day meeting, the Working Group also selected a chair and vice-chair. The chair is Hamed Assaf, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the American University of Beirut and an active member of the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs. The vice-chair is Mohamed Raouf, Program Manager and Environment Researcher at the Gulf Research Center in Dubai. ■



International Migration Statistics

ESCWA organized the Regional Workshop on International Migration Statistics to upgrade regional knowledge on the matter. The workshop was held in collaboration with the United Nations Population Division, the Arab Labor Organization (ALO) and the second Euro-Mediterranean Statistical Cooperation (MEDSTAT II) program from 30 June to 3 July 2009 in Cairo, Egypt.

The workshop aimed at enhancing the Arab countries' knowledge on international recommendations, concepts and definitions on international migration statistics and discussing the different sources of data. It also offered a platform to discuss the various methods of compiling, producing and disseminating indicators, as well as the international migration and the economical and social development in the ESCWA Region.

The workshop concluded with a number of recommendations that stressed the importance of considering the 2010 round of population housing censuses as a unique opportunity to significantly improve the availability and comparability of international migration statistics. It also recommended the improvement of administrative system pertaining border crossing and statistics regarding work and residence permits in order to improve the quality of data in this area, and in particular measuring labor mobility. It also determined that it was crucial to have good-quality data on youth migration and to carry out household surveys (HHS) on a regular basis to collect data on international migration. Also, different sources of international migration statistics should be reconciled to establish the best possible estimates for migration indicators.

Fifty-three participants hailing from national statistical offices and ministries of interior affairs in the ESCWA member countries, as well as from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, attended the meeting. Experts were also present from regional and international organizations - ESCWA, the UN Population Division, the second Euro-Mediterranean Statistical Cooperation (MEDSTAT II) program, the International Organization of Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Arab Labor Organization, the League of Arab States, as well as an international expert in the area of international migration statistics. ■

Address

P.O. Box 11-8575, Riad El-Solh, Beirut-Lebanon
Tel.: 961-1-981301; Fax: 961-1-981510

e-mail: webmaster-escwa@un.org
website: www.escwa.un.org