

**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations**

**EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION
AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB REGION:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Objectives of the Meeting

International migration is an integral part of the development process. It presents both challenges and opportunities for countries of origin, destination and transit as well as for international migrants and their families. Increasingly, governments are seeking for ways to effectively capture the economic and social benefits of international migration, while mitigating its negative effects. In order to identify appropriate ways and means to maximize its development benefits and minimize its negative impacts, the United Nations General Assembly has decided to organize a high-level dialogue to discuss the multi-dimensional aspects of international migration and development in New York on 14 and 15 September 2006.

To facilitate dialogue at the regional level, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia of the United Nations, in collaboration with the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, is organizing an Expert Group Meeting on *International Migration and Development in the Arab Region: Challenges and Opportunities*. The meeting will take place in Beirut, Lebanon, from 15 to 17 May 2006.

The purpose of the Meeting is to provide a forum for substantive examination and discussion of key issues that Governments, international organizations and civil society face in addressing the challenges and opportunities that international migration poses for development in the Arab region. The Meeting will bring together experts from academia and research centers, government officials, representatives of international organizations, civil society and the private sector. It is expected that the meeting will provide a useful platform to exchange views and debate regional issues in preparation for the high-level dialogue of the United Nations General Assembly.

The main outcome of the Meeting will be a comprehensive report of the discussions held. The report will also include the papers contributed by participants to the Meeting.