

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES
OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA
RELATED TO THE 2006 HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

As a follow-up to the 2006 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has issued several publications, and has actively participated in meetings on international migration and development. ESCWA is planning future activities related to international migration, including a joint United Nations project on national capacities to deal with international migration. ESCWA is planning to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the near future.

A. COMPLETED AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES OF ESCWA RELATED TO
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The following lists various reports recently issued by ESCWA on international migration and development. It also mentions meetings in this field in which ESCWA participated.

- Wallchart on *International Migration and Development in the Arab Region*

This wallchart, issued in 2007, is based on background papers of the Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and Development in the Arab Region, which was organized in collaboration with the United Nations Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and held in Beirut, Lebanon, from 15 to 17 May 2006. It was prepared in light of the regional and global events undertaken to account for the various dimensions of international migration, including the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development held in New York, from 14 to 15 September 2006. This wallchart highlights the social, economic, political and demographic aspects leading to and resulting from international migration in the Arab Region.

- Population and Development Report, Third Issue on *International Migration and Development in the Arab Region: Challenges and Opportunities*

The Population and Development Report is one of a series of analytical reports published biennially by ESCWA. The third issue of this report, published in July 2007, addressed international migration and development. It analysed patterns and trends of Arab migration, focusing on the relation between international migration and development and on migrant remittances in the Arab Region. Furthermore, the report analysed policies affecting migration flows adopted by sending and receiving countries over time, in light of economic, social and political changes in the region.

- Social Development Bulletin, Fourth Issue on *International Migration and Development in the Arab Region*¹

This bulletin was issued in December 2007. It examined the relation between international migration and development, highlighting the activities of ESCWA in this area. It analysed the patterns and trends of Arab migration as well as migration policies adopted by Arab countries.

The bulletin also explained how international migration can be viewed as an opportunity for equitable social and economic development.

- Fact-sheet on *International Migration and Development in the Arab Region*

This fact-sheet was issued in 2007. It briefly examined current and projected international migration trends in the region, addressing labour migration to the Gulf countries, the impact of migration on the age and sex structure of the population, the impact of migration remittances and the causes and implications of the emigration of highly skilled workers in the Arab region.

- Paper on *Labour Migration in Arab Countries*

This paper was presented at the Sixth Session of the Social Development Committee, held in Amman, Jordan, from 5 to 7 March 2007. It focused on the economic and social implications of Arab labour migration and analysed national migration policies adopted by labour sending and labour receiving countries.

- Paper on *The Demographic and Socio-economic Implications of the Structural Imbalance of the Labour Force in Gulf Countries*

This paper was presented by ESCWA to the Forum on the Labour Market in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, organized by the General Secretariat for Development Planning (GSDP) in Doha, Qatar, from 29 to 31 October 2007. The paper consisted of four parts: (a) an analysis of the structure of the national and foreign labour force in Gulf countries; (b) a review of the demographic, social and economic implications of labour migration to the Gulf countries; (c) an analysis of the impact of existing national policies on migration patterns, and (d) a presentation of a strategic vision for socio-economic development in the Gulf countries.

- ESCWA also participated in the Workshop on Women and International Migration, organized by the Lebanon Family Planning Association (LFPA) in collaboration with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, in Beirut, Lebanon, on the occasion of the World Population Day on 11 July 2008.

B. PROPOSED FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF ESCWA RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

ESCWA will participate in the Development Account project on Strengthening national capacities to deal with international migration: Maximizing development benefits and minimizing negative impact. This project will be carried out jointly by the five United Nations regional commissions and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) for two years, with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) as the lead agency. The project aims at strengthening national capacities by improving data availability and data quality on international migration, by increasing institutional and human capacities to design and implement policies and programmes and by promoting cooperation through an effective intra- and inter-regional network for the exchange of information, studies, policies, experiences and best practices among countries and regions. The coordinated action of the five regional commissions and DESA, as well as the collaboration with other partners such as intergovernmental organizations, regional development entities and research centers, will help build knowledge and capacities in the field of international migration and its impact on development. The project will highlight female migration in particular.

ESCWA will contribute to a paper on *International Mobility of Arab Youth in a Globalized World: Trends, Challenges and Potentials*. This paper, prepared by IOM, will analyse the underlying demographic, economic and social factors impacting migration in the Arab region, with special emphasis on youth. An analysis of the characteristics of young Arabs and their propensity to migrate will be provided, with a focus on gender, skills and levels of education. Main sending countries, such as Egypt, and receiving countries, such as Kuwait, will be analysed looking at factors such as education, duration of stay, as well as the role of youth in transnational communities. A section of the paper will analyse the impact of migration of young people on development in the Arab region, including the emigration of highly skilled workers. The paper will conclude with policy options for better management of migration of young people, including formulation of integrated policies that build on the individual capacities of migrant youth and address youth participation in the development process and their integration into public life. This paper will be presented during the Expert Group Meeting on Reinforcing Social Equity: Integrating Youth in the Development Process, to be organized by ESCWA in Doha, Qatar, on 8 January 2009.

Lastly, ESCWA and the International Organization for Migration are planning to sign a Memorandum of Understanding in the near future. The MOU will explore various ways of collaboration between ESCWA and IOM in the area of international migration and development.

NOTE

¹ See http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/div_editor/Download.asp?table_name=other_ar&field_name=ID&FileID=376 (accessed 26 February 2009) (in Arabic).

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United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2008a). *Population and Development Report, Third Issue-International Migration and Development in the Arab Region: Challenges and Opportunities*. Beirut: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2008b). *International Migration and Development in the Arab Region* (wallchart). Beirut: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. (see also <http://css.escwa.org.lb/sdd/wallchart/International Migration.pdf>. (accessed 31 December 2008)).