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REPORT
**MEETING OF HEADS OF NATIONAL POPULATION
COMMITTEES/COUNCILS IN
THE ARAB COUNTRIES**

Beirut, 18-19 November 1999

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INTRODUCTION

The second meeting of Heads of National Population Committees and their counterparts in the Arab World was held from 18-19 November 1999, at the Headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Beirut. This meeting was held within the framework of the follow-up of policies and programmes of action of the Arab countries in the field of population and development and the exchange of experiences. It was also held in implementation of one of the recommendations of the representatives of the national population committees adopted during their first meeting, 2-4 June 1998, at the headquarters of the League of Arab States (LAS), Cairo and in response to the invitation of the Population Research and studies Unit of LAS and of ESCWA, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The objectives of this meeting can be summed up as follows:

1. Exchange of experiences in the field of population policies and programmes among the Arab countries.
2. Follow-up of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).
3. Research Unit of LAS during 1999 and its programmes of action for 2000.

I. PARTICIPANTS

The meeting was attended by the heads and representatives of the National population committees and their counterparts in the following countries:

Bahrain	Oman
Egypt	Saudi Arabia
Iraq	Sudan
Jordan	Syrian Arab Republic
Kuwait	Tunisia
Lebanon	United Arab Emirates
Mauritania	Yemen
Morocco	

Participants also included representatives of the organizing bodies and a number of population experts and representatives of some Arab and international agencies (see Annex II, "List of Participants").

II. OPENING SESSION AND AGENDA

H. E. Dr. Michel Mousa, the Lebanese Minister of Social Affairs, opened the meeting. The opening session was attended by representatives of the League of Arab States (LAS), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), United

Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Beirut based ambassadors of a number of Arab countries.

Following the opening session, the representative of Lebanon was elected Chairman of the meeting; heads of the delegations of Iraq, Kuwait, Sudan and Egypt were elected vice-Chairmen, and the head of the Tunisian delegation was elected rapporteur of the meeting and the chairman of the drafting committee.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following presentation and discussion of national reports and of activities of national population councils and committees and their counterparts, and the review of their successes and constraints, and after presentation and discussion of the two working papers submitted by the Population Research and studies Unit of the LAS on its activities for the year 1999-2000, and on "The Migration of Labor and the inflow of workers into the Arab countries", and following the review by the participants of conclusions of the Workshop meetings on Population Policies and Sustainable Development: Follow-up and Evaluation Indicators and Information Systems", the participants adopted the following:

1. They reaffirmed the importance of the roles played by Population Councils and Committees and counterparts in contributing to the implementation of national population policies and programmes and in coordinating between the relevant governmental and civil parties involved, and their role also in asserting the comprehensive and integrated method for the formulation and implementation of population policies in the Arab countries. They also reaffirmed the importance of the appeal to the countries to support the roles of these population committees and their counterparts.
2. They expressed appreciation for the efforts of the states, which set up, during the past year, national population committees, in keeping with the recommendations of the first Meeting of the Heads of National Committees, in 1998. They also call upon countries, which do not have similar committees, to undertake to establish them.
3. Participants call upon the competent authorities in the countries to request the national population committees to provide the Population Research and Studies Unit of LAS with the latest statistical data related to population projects, programmes and activities, whenever possible, so that the Unit can update its data base, and publish and circulate it at the appropriate time. They reaffirm their appreciation for the role of the Unit in the building up and strengthening the quantitative and qualitative population database of the Arab World, and urge to coordinate with ESCWA in this respect.
4. In view of the pressing need for the national committees in the Arab countries to share experiences, expertise, studies and research, participants reaffirm the importance of the Unit being provided with all population reports, studies and research, in order that it might be able to prepare abstracts of them and to

incorporate them into the **bibliographical database** and to list them on the Unit's Web site.

5. The participants reaffirm the importance of reinforcing and enriching the site on the Internet, and the need to call on all national committees to create similar sites and to work on inter-netting these sites with the site of the Population Research and Studies Unit.
6. They reaffirmed the focus on Arab and international migration and the need to pay special attention to it in the field of population policies and they called on the national population committees and councils to actively participate in the activities of the programme to monitor migration and to provide the LAS Unit with relevant data.
7. The Population Research Unit of LAS was called upon to include the theme of the Arab brain drain in the migration monitoring programme and to organize meetings of Arab experts in the field of international migration to highlight national activities and needed Arab coordination in this respect, and to enlist the help of the competent international bodies and host countries to secure information and data on Arab migrant labor.
8. The participants call upon the Arab countries and ESCWA, after having examined the conclusions of the Workshop on "Population Policies and Sustainable Development: Follow-up and Evaluation Indicators and Information Systems", to seek to implement the recommendations of the Workshop.
9. The participants recognize the importance of the Youth Sector and the need to give it special attention within the context of Population Policies in the Arab countries; they call upon the Research and Studies Unit in LAS and ESCWA to work for the convening of an Arab conference on Youth and Population issues in the Arab World during the coming period.
10. In view of the importance and the diversity of Arab population activities and programmes experiences, and given the benefit of their integration and cooperation, the participants call on the Research Unit and ESCWA to seek, in cooperation with the United Nations population Fund, to organize a gathering or to create a working group to review and discuss some original, distinctive and successful initiatives and programmes in the Arab countries, and to consider ways of benefiting from them on a wider scale.
11. Considering the importance of the activities undertaken by the Research Unit and its growing role in supporting the activities and programmes of the national committees, the participants call on the concerned League authorities to bolster the Unit personnel and the human resources in a manner that will enable it to implement its plan of action in suitable conditions and to secure necessary support from donor sources.
12. They reaffirmed the importance of this annual meeting and called on the organizers to send out invitations and appropriate preparatory documents, in order that the countries could prepare their contributions in due time.

In closing, the head of the Jordanian delegation invited the next meeting of Heads of national population councils and committees to convene in Amman. The Jordanian national committee will provide all possible facilities for that purpose. This proposal was unanimously accepted by the participants. The meeting will be held in June, 2000.

The participants expressed their deep appreciation and gratitude to the Lebanese Government for its gracious hospitality, and to the meeting organizers for the excellent arrangements, which provided the best working conditions.

ANNEX I

Agenda of the Workshop

Thursday, 18 November 1999

9:00 - 9:30	Registration
9:30 - 10:00	Opening session – Election of the Bureau
10:00 - 10:30	Break
10:30 - 13:00	Country reports: presentation and discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Egypt- Iraq- Jordan- Syria- tunisia
13:00 - 13:15	Break
11:15 - 14:00	Review of the activities of LAS Research and Studies Unit
14:00 - 15:30	Lunch

Friday, 19 November 1999

9:00 - 10:00	Labor migration and inflow of workers												
10:00 - 10:30	Presentation of the Workshop conclusions												
10:30 - 11:00	Break												
11:00 - 12:00	Country reports:												
	<table><tr><td>- Algeria</td><td>- Morocco</td></tr><tr><td>- Bahrain</td><td>- Saudi Arabia</td></tr><tr><td>- Kuwait</td><td>- Sudan</td></tr><tr><td>- Lebanon</td><td>- United Arab Emirates</td></tr><tr><td>- Oman</td><td>- Yemen</td></tr><tr><td>- Mauritania</td><td></td></tr></table>	- Algeria	- Morocco	- Bahrain	- Saudi Arabia	- Kuwait	- Sudan	- Lebanon	- United Arab Emirates	- Oman	- Yemen	- Mauritania	
- Algeria	- Morocco												
- Bahrain	- Saudi Arabia												
- Kuwait	- Sudan												
- Lebanon	- United Arab Emirates												
- Oman	- Yemen												
- Mauritania													
	Final Report												

ANNEX II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. DELEGATIONS FROM ARAB GOVERNMENTS

Bahrain

Dr. Abdul-Wahab M. Abdul-Wahab
Assist. Under-Secretary, Ministry of Health
P.O.B. 12 Bahrain
Tel. 0973 274 811
Fax 233167

Ms. Elham Mansoor Al Baharna
Senior Administrative Analyst
Ministry of Health
P.O.B. 12 Bahrain
Tel. 289856
Bahrain

Egypt

Mr. Mursi Mansour Mursi
Information Systems Unit
Population and Family Planning Sector
Ministry of Health
3 – Parliament St.
Tel. 012 3325463/ 3045228
E-mail: drmorsi@hotmail.com

Iraq

Dr. Hassan Al-Khatib
President, Planning Commission
Tel. 8853646
Fax 885 3653
Baghdad - Iraq

Mr. Talib Ibrahim Al 'Ukabi
Director General, Labour Planning Dpt.
Planning Authority
P. O. Box 8001 Baghdad - Iraq
Tel. 009641 5433931
Fax. 009641 8853653
E-mail: plan@miscriraq.net

Jordan

Mr. Mohamed Najeeb Abdullah Assarayera
Secretary General
Nl. Population Committee
Amman – Jordan

Mr. Amer Abdul-Fattah Bakir
Economical Consultant/Deputy Secretary
General
National Population Committee
Tel. 5825241
Fax 5837250
E-mail: amnafaah@hotmail.com

Kuwait

Mr. Hamad Al-Monawer
Under-Secretary, Ministry of Planning
P.O.B. 15 – Z. Code: 1 3001
Tel. 2430461
Kuwait

Ms. Inam Abdulla Al Mutawa
Director / Human Development Department
Ministry of Planning
P.O.B. 15 Kuwait
Tel. 00965 2424961
Fax 2412823

Ms. Maisa Mohamed Al-Muhanna
Statistical Researcher
P.O.B 38421 # 7225 Dahiat – Kuwait
Tel. 2430461
Fax: 2412823
E-mail: m_maysa@hotmail.com

Ms. Wessal Abdul Aziz Madoh
Observer
Ministry of Planning
P.O.B. 15 Kuwait
Tel. 00965 2424961
Fax 2412823

Lebanon

Dr. Michel Moussa
Minister, Social Affairs
Ministry of Social Affairs
Beirut – Lebanon

Ms. Diana Mohamed Dakkak
Information and Administration Officer
Lebanon Family Planning Association
Cornish Mazraa El Maskan Bldg.
Tel. 01 311978
Fax: 01 318575
E-mail: ddakkak@intracom.net.lb

Ms. Hala Naufal
Professor at the Lebanese University
Institute of Social Sciences
Tel 01 375124 / 03 386928
Fax: 00961 1 373018
E-mail: rizh@inco.com.lb

Ms. Mireille Rahmeh
Research Assistant
National Population Council
Ministry of Social Affairs
Tel 01 373019 / 921289
Fax 01 373018

Ms. Mirna Sfeir
Ministry of Social Affairs
Tel. 01 384381
Fax: 01 384406

Mauritania

Mr. Ahmedou Ould Hademine
Responsible / C.N.P./M.A.E.D.
National Population Council
Ministry of Social Affairs
Nouakchott
Tel. 222 2 55220/250039
Fax: 253335/256443
E-mail: ahmedou@iiardd.mr

Morocco

Mr. Ali El Youbi
Ingenieur- Chercheur
Chef du departement du suivi de la politique
demographique
CERED, POB 178, Rabat
Ministere des previsions Economiques et
du plan
Tel. 212 7 774271
Fax 212 7 681927
E-mail: cered@mpep.gov.ma

Oman

Mr. Ali Mahboob al Raisi
Director General of Social Statistics
Ministry of National Economy
POB 881 Muscat 113
Tel. 698825
Fax 698909
E-mail: social@moneoman.org

Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Al-Qasmi
Director, Health Information and Statistics
Ministry of Health
POB 172 Postal Code 620 Samael
Tel: 968 605474
Fax 968 696533
E-mail: ahmqasmi@hotmail.com

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Abdullah Sulaiman Al-Othaim
Director General, Ministry of Planning
P.O.B. 3735 – Riyadh
Tel. 4050950
Fax 4059493
Riyadh – Saudi Arabia

Mr. Mohanna Abdel Karim Al Mohanna
General Manager
Population and Social Statistics
POB 30291 Postal Code 11477
Tel. 4013058
Fax 4014138#160

Sudan

Dr. Isam Taha Osman
Head, Population and Development
National Population Policy Project, NPC
Street 35, POB 3995
Khartoum
Tel 249 472677
Fax 249 472000
E-mail: isamtaha@hotmail.com

Syria

Mr. Tafeek Isma'il
Under-Secretary / Ministry of Planning
Ministry of Planning
Fax 5121415
Damascus

Mr. Ibrahim Abdel Rahman Ali
Director General
Bureau of Statistics

Address: St. Nissar Kabbany – CBS
Damascus
Arab Republic of Syria
Tel. 3330975
Fax 3322292

Tunisia

Mr. Ahmed Abdennadher
Director of Research Center on Reproductive
health
2 Rue Taher Ben Ezeddine- 2080
Tunisia
Tel. 216 1712200
Fax 216 1 712300

Mr. Mongi Chaalab
Statistician
42 Avenue de Madrid, 1002 Tunis
Tel. 216 1341 088
Fax 216 1 354507

United Arab Emirates

Mr. Rashed Abdel Rahman Al-Neaimi
Director General of Planning Department
Ministry of Planning
POB 904 – Abu-Dhabi
Tel. 02 275801
Fax 02 276456

Mr. Taha Ibrahim Khodair
Director General of Statistical Demography
Department
Ministry of Planning
POB 904 – Abu-Dhabi
Tel. 262305
Fax 261344

Yemen

Mr. Mohamad Ali Al-Hajj
Secretary General, NPC
Tel. 231313
Fax 231525
Sanaa – Yemen

Mr. Mujahed Ahmed Al Shaab
D. G. of IEC department
National Population Council
Technical Secretariat
POB 12551 Sanaa
Tel. 231313/528
Fax 231313

B. United Nations Population Fund

Mr. Hussein Abdel Aziz Sayed
CST , Amman
Tel.9626 5532835
Fax.962 6 5516580
E-mail: sayed@cstamman.org.jo

Mr. Francois Farah
TSS Specialist
ESCWA

C. League of Arab States

Mr. Kahled Louhichi
Director of Population Research Unit
League of Arab States
22(A) Taha Hussein St. Zamalek
Tel. 202 3404306
Fax 202 3401422
E-mail: arleagu@idsc1.gov.eg
Website: www.poplas.org

Ms. Ghada Ahmed Abdel Moneem
Secretary of Population Research Unit
League of Arab States
22(A) Taha Hussein St. Zamalek
Tel. 202 3404306
Fax 202 3401422
E-mail: arleagu@idsc1.gov.eg
Website: www.poplas.org

D. Secretariat

Mr. Akil Akil, Chief
Social Development Issues and Policies Division
ESCWA

Mr. Youssef Gemayel, Chief
Population Section
ESCWA

Ms. Batool Shakoori
Population Affairs Officer
ESCWA

Ms.Dina Tannir
Research Assistant
ESCWA

Ms. Josephine Fakhouri
Secretary
ESCWA