

Regional Commissions Development Update



Twenty-third issue, October 2007

Combating climate change and promoting global development: A regional perspective

In December 2007, world leaders will assemble in Bali, Indonesia, to explore further actions to effectively address the globally recognized challenges of climate change. Some months later, in the second half of 2008, Ministerial and High Level representatives of United Nations Member States will be heading to Doha, Qatar, for the "Follow-up Conference on Financing for Development". Both events provide the world with a renewed opportunity to address the challenges of the sustainable development agenda, with its three pillars, which has gained universal acceptance since its adoption at the Earth Summit in 1992, in an integrated manner.

In Bali, Governments will consider wide-ranging policy options and possible initiatives to spur an effective international response to climate change. Addressing the needs of the developing countries must be at the heart of those discussions. From this perspective, achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol as well as the effective pursuit of global development goals, starting with achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), are inextricably and increasingly interlinked with broader global adherence to the commitments undertaken in the Monterrey Consensus, adopted at the International Conference on Financing for Development in 2002.

Indeed, while combating climate change is an integral part of the far-reaching sustainable development agenda, mobilizing the new and additional resources needed for adaptation and mitigation purposes, notably in the developing countries, is attainable through the operational framework and principal actions identified in the Monterrey consensus. The Doha Follow-up Conference on Financing for Development therefore provides both the framework and the opportunity to keep up the momentum and foster any further agreements that can be built upon the outcome of the Bali conference. These should include the provision of innovative means and resources to assist the developing countries in meeting the challenges of climate change, without adversely affecting the level of assistance directed for development purposes. The involvement and participation of the private sector to achieve such ambitious, but essential, objectives are indispensable.

Also essential is cross-border, multilateral and regional collaboration in terms of assessment and support for implementation of commitments in both the climate change and the Financing for Development agendas. Since the adoption of the Monterrey Consensus, the Regional Commissions have been playing a leading role in their respective regions, in cooperation with other relevant regional stakeholders and financial institutions, to ensure regional follow-up and implementation of the results of the International Conference on Financing for Development. On the climate change agenda, the Commissions have been undertaking actions to develop and strengthen arrangements for joint activities at regional and subregional levels. The recent agreement between the Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Environment Programme to deepen their collaboration on the economic costs of climate change in Africa is a case in point.

Accordingly, the Regional Commissions remain committed to harnessing their analytical and technical capacities in support of the countries of their regions to overcome the challenges of climate change, and to support the initiatives to mobilize the resources needed to meet their development agenda.

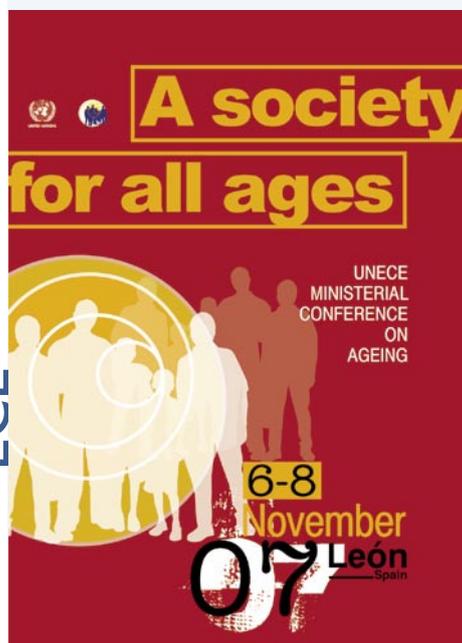
Abdoulie Jannet

Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of UNECA,
Current Coordinator of the Regional Commissions

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Editorial



How to meet the challenges of longer-life societies

Population ageing has become an increasing concern for Governments in the UNECE region. In most countries, the period which has seen the working-age population at a record high, the time of the so-called “demographic bonus”, is gradually coming to an end. While the degree and timing of this process may vary greatly, the change is common to all countries, and has important and far-reaching implications across all spheres of society, including on economic and social development, sustainability and equity.

This year, UNECE member States are taking stock of the implementation of the commitments made in 2002 when they adopted the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). To review progress made and challenges to be met, the Government of Spain and the UNECE are organizing a Ministerial Conference on Ageing in León, Spain, from 6 to 8 November 2007. A forum for civil society and the scientific community will precede the Conference. The Conference is expected to adopt a political declaration that will identify priorities for future action. The intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Conference met on 12 and 13 July 2007 in Geneva to deliberate and decide on the content and

documents for the Conference, including the political declaration.

In their recommendations, experts emphasized the need to adopt an integrated approach, one that considers the different needs of different stages of an individual’s life course, the questions of how to apply mainstreaming ageing as the major policy strategy, and the overarching objective of building society for all ages. Broad participation and social cohesion are the key elements to achieving a society for all ages. This makes a highly participatory approach essential, whereby older persons are involved in decision-making processes not only on ageing-related issues, but on all social issues. The important role of NGOs in implementing this approach is vital, as is the need for research to strengthen the knowledge base for policymaking.

Maximizing the benefits of intellectual property rights in economies in transition

A well-designed intellectual property regime increases national wealth and benefits consumers by stimulating research and investment into new technologies and innovative products, and by enabling the transfer of technology, including between countries at different stages of economic development. Innovative industries are key drivers of economic growth and key providers of well-paying jobs, thus contributing to the achievement of broad development objectives.

However, these benefits are not automatic. Inadequate legal, regulatory and policy frameworks underpinning IP can hold back economic development. They can undermine the incentives to invest in research and development, impede the diffusion of technology, contribute to economic losses from IP-related crime, and add to public health and safety hazards from unsafe counterfeit goods.

From 25 to 27 July 2007 UNECE hosted in Geneva an International Conference on “Intellectual Property Rights Protection and Transforming Research and Development Outputs into Intangible Assets in Economies in

Transition” to address those challenges. The Conference was followed by the annual meeting of the Team of Specialists on Intellectual Property.

Experts from national IP offices and ministries, international organizations, research institutions and the business community met to discuss good practices and policies in intellectual property commercialization, and protection and rights enforcement in the UNECE region, with a special focus on countries with economies in transition.

UNECE Conference launches capacity-building programme for PPPs

Throughout the UNECE region, public-private partnerships (PPPs) have become an important ingredient in international economic policy. Yet PPPs require a blend of different skills as well as changes within the public administration. In particular, the lack of knowledge, skills, and training of government officials in PPPs constitutes a main obstacle to their development. This topic was the primary theme for an International Conference on “Reducing Barriers to Entrepreneurship and Encouraging Enterprise Development: Policy Options”, held in Tel Aviv, Israel, from 5 to 8 June 2007, which was organized by the Government of Israel and UNECE. The conference attracted over 300 participants representing public and private sectors from around 30 countries in the UNECE region, representatives from UNESCAP and UNECA, as well as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). As a result of the conference, a capacity building programme for PPPs was launched.

The conference participants also approved a “concluding document” that provided policy suggestions and recommendations for follow-ups to the conference, including launching a new initiative that would train at least 200 officials from public and private sectors from UNECE region countries with economies in transition, while working with partners such as EBRD and the European Union.



Obstacles to enterprise development in the “catching-up economies”

National and international experts from the UNECE region met at an International Conference, “Reducing Barriers to Entrepreneurship and Encouraging Enterprise Development: Policy Options”, held in Geneva from 18 to 19 June 2007, to address the main problems confronting business operators and small companies in the so-called “catching-up economies” of the UNECE region.

In these economies, business operators often find it difficult to set up and operate small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Bureaucracies can be inefficient, taxes high, and regulations cumbersome. The financial markets are also underdeveloped, and access to enterprise finance is limited. This international conference addressed these and other major obstacles to enterprise development and promotion in these countries. It also reviewed the country policies aimed at improving SME access to foreign markets. On the basis of good practices identified at the conference, participants developed recommendations to government bodies in charge of enterprise development.

Economic globalization: a challenge for official statistics

In recent years many concerns have been raised that the traditional methods of measuring the national economy are not suitable in the increasingly globalized world. A seminar on “Economic Globalization: A Challenge for Official Statistics”, organized by UNECE jointly with the European Free Trade Association and the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, was held in Kiev from 3 to 6 July 2007. The seminar provided the national statistical offices with a forum to share ideas and discuss approaches to cope with the distortion caused by the activities of multinational enterprises on the production of statistics. It raised awareness of the role of statistics for decision-making and the challenges that

the statisticians face due to globalization, and also dealt with the practical problems associated with globalization, and pointed at possible solutions. The seminar is considered a kick-off event for a series of meetings where representatives of national statistical services will discuss the main distortions in the compilation of national accounts and related source statistics caused by globalization and will propose approaches and guidance on how to tackle these distortions.

Entire UNECE region forest sector being reshaped by wood energy policies and markets

Responding to climate change and energy security concerns, government policies in Europe and North America are accelerating woodfuel demand to meet targets for renewable energy. Rising demand for wood energy, in addition to the wood and paper industry’s increasing demand for wood raw materials, necessitates mobilizing more wood, which is reshaping the entire forest sector, with long-term opportunities and short-term consequences. Approximately half of the 472 million m3 harvested in Europe, and the 679 million m3 harvested in North America, is sooner or later used for energy.

These are just some of the highlights from the recently released UNECE/FAO *Forest Products Annual Market Review, 2006-2007*, which covers forest products market and policy developments in the UNECE member States. The comprehensive report will be presented at the first joint UNECE Timber Committee and International Softwood Conference Market Discussions on 8 and 9 October 2007 in Geneva. The annual report is part of the integrated programme of work of the UNECE and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

The *Forest Products Annual Market Review* begins with an overview of forest products markets and policies, and a chapter on government and industry policy issues which have an impact on forest products markets. These are followed by analyses of the economic factors affecting the forest and forest industries sector. Statistics-based chapters are included for markets of sawn

softwood, sawn hardwood, wood-based panels, paper, paperboard and woodpulp, wood raw materials and tropical timber. The Review may be obtained from the website homepage of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission, at <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber>.

ECE

ECE selected publications

UNECE Countries in Figures 2007

Sales No. E.07.II.E.8
ISBN 13:978-92-1-116960-7

Managing Statistical Confidentiality & Microdata Access - Principles and Guidelines of Good Practice

Sales No. E.07.II.E.7
ISBN 13:978-92-1-116959-1

Convention on Road Traffic of 1968 and European Agreement Supplementing the Convention (2006 consolidated versions)

Sales No. E.07.VIII.5
ISBN 13:978-92-1-139124-4

Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS), Second revised edition

Sales No. E.07.II.E.5
ISBN 13:978-92-1-116957-7

Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods - Model Regulations, Fifteenth revised edition

Sales No. E.07.VIII.1 (Vol. I & II)
ISBN 13:978-92-1-139120-6

Environmental Performance Reviews Lessons from Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia: Ukraine, Second review

Sales No. E.07.II.E.6
ISBN 978-92-1-116958-4

Activities of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

UN Secretary-General appoints Noeleen Heyzer of Singapore as Executive Secretary of UNESCAP

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of Noeleen Heyzer of Singapore as Executive Secretary of UNESCAP on 30 July 2007. Ms. Heyzer is the first woman to head UNESCAP, which is the biggest of the UN's five regional commissions, both in terms of population served and area covered.

Ms. Heyzer was the first Executive Director from the South to head the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the leading operational agency within the United Nations to promote women's empowerment and gender equality. Since taking up that position in 1994, she has worked on strengthening women's economic security and rights; promoting women's leadership in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and governance; ending violence against women; and combating HIV/AIDS from a gender perspective. She played a critical role in the Security Council's adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security and undertook extensive missions to conflict-affected countries worldwide to ensure its implementation to make a difference in women's lives on the ground.

Before joining UNIFEM, Ms. Heyzer worked as a researcher for the World Employment Programme of the International Labour Organization (ILO), and was a Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. She served in UNESCAP, where she focused on youth employment and the preparation for the Third World Conference on Women. She was also Director of the Gender Programme of the Asia and Pacific Development Centre. In this role, Ms. Heyzer was a policy adviser to several Asian governments on gender issues, playing a key role in the formulation of national development policies, strategies and programmes from a gender perspective.



Regional forum explores win-win solutions for climate change and economic growth



UNESCAP, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, co-hosted the 17th Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change, from 31 July to 3 August 2007, in Bangkok. The seminar series started in the early 1990s to promote the exchange of ideas between businesses, NGOs and government policymakers. It has produced a number of important outcomes, such as cooperation between Japan and China on climate change issues. This year's seminar attracted participants from around 30 countries. The focus of the seminar was on development goals and climate change. Special attention was given to initiatives which reduce greenhouse gas emissions while advancing development objectives. The seminar was held with the support of a series of partners, including the Australian Greenhouse Office, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand, and Overseas Environmental Cooperation Center, Japan.

UNESCAP helps rural women to build up their businesses through the Internet



UNESCAP is working to establish a regional knowledge network of rural women's cooperatives which will enable women entrepreneurs to share their business knowledge and experiences and market their products through the Internet. A regional meeting took place from 23 to 24 August 2007 in Bangkok, with over 30 participants representing agriculture and cooperative ministries, organizations of rural women entrepreneurs, cooperatives and cooperative unions, regional knowledge networks and United Nations agencies.

Participants developed and adopted a strategy for the creation of a regional knowledge network of rural women's cooperatives and discussed the implementation of a pilot model e-business centre in a women's agricultural cooperative. The meeting also served to identify key training needs of women's agricultural cooperatives to build their capacity in entrepreneurship and in information and communication technology (ICT) applications.

Rural women's cooperatives play a vital role in fostering women's entrepreneurship, women's empowerment and rural development. The proposed web-based knowledge network will enable women's cooperatives across the region to share good practices, experiences, and information for business development, to strengthen entrepreneurial skills, and enhance marketing of their products through the Internet. The meeting is part of a UNESCAP project supported by the Government of the Republic of Korea entitled "Establishment of sustainable E-business and network for green cooperative enterprises for women in rural communities," which aims to empower women in rural communities through building capacity in entrepreneurial skills and in the use of ICTs.



UNESCAP/ADB/UNDP Regional Action Plan urges governments to pay more attention to the social agenda

ESCAP

Participants at a subregional development forum, held from 19 to 20 July 2007 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, have called on North and Central Asian governments to channel the benefits of strong economic growth in recent years to lagging social sectors, by improving educational and health care services. Participants also highlighted the importance of monitoring the use of dwindling water resources.

More than 100 participants in the North and Central Asian MDG Forum from 11 countries identified child mortality, undernourishment and poverty among children and marginalized groups, and lack of access to affordable social services as major road blocks to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They emphasized the need for strong legal frameworks for protecting children's rights, targeted social assistance to poor and marginalized groups, quotas for women in parliament, and an intergovernmental agreement on labour migration to ease worker remittances.

Other points in the Plan of Action include recommendations to establish free economic zones, initiate a subregional plan for tourism, establish a mechanism for Integrated Water Resource Management within existing intergovernmental processes, improve national statistical capacity to monitor progress on MDGs, introduce Community-Based Monitoring Systems to track progress on MDGs, create national ombudsman positions to address corruption, carry out public awareness campaigns on child rights, and establish mechanisms to learn from other country experiences in reducing poverty.

The Forum is part of a tripartite MDG initiative by UNESCAP, UNDP and Asian Development Bank. A South Asia regional forum was held in Nepal in October 2006, and an East and South-East Asia forum was held in Viet Nam in March 2007.

Expert group meeting to promote trade between Asian subregions

Over the past decade, Asia has witnessed rapid economic growth driven by strong external demand. During this period intraregional trade in Asia has also grown considerably. However, there is still room for Asian countries to strengthen their trade relationships, especially through the elimination of trade barriers within the region. The Expert Group Meeting on Promoting Trade between Asian Subregions, held from 1 to 3 August 2007 in Kunming, China, examined current trends in trade between the subregions. In addition, participants sought to increase public awareness, identify good practices and promote cooperation among the subregions. Participants also sought to promote participation by small and medium-sized enterprises in global and regional supply chains.

Grassroots innovation to be promoted by the Asian and Pacific Centre for Technology Transfer in India

A Workshop on Grassroots Innovation (GRI) was held from 16 to 18 August 2007 in Ahmedabad, India, organized by the Asian and Pacific Centre for Technology Transfer, a subsidiary of ESCAP, with the assistance and cooperation of the Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies and Institutions. During the three-day workshop participants were provided with in-depth knowledge on scouting, documentation and dissemination (SDD) of GRI, along with the opportunity to share experiences and good practices. Participants also made a one-day field visit to enable them to interact with grassroots innovators and experts involved in SDD. The workshop is part of the Promotion of Grassroots Innovation Project, funded by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research and the Ministry of Science and Technology of the Government of India. The project aims to assist governments and other stakeholders to promote grassroots innovation.



ESCAP selected publications

Achieving the Health Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific: Policies and Actions within Health Systems and Beyond

Sales No. E.07.II.F19
ISBN 978-92-1-120513-8

Sustainable Infrastructure in Asia

Sales No. E.07.II.F16
ISBN 978-92-1-120507-7

E-Business Development Services for SMEs in Selected ASEAN Countries and Southern China

Sales No. E.07.II.F8
ISBN 978-92-1-120502-2

Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Review Vol. 2, No. 2

Sales No. E.06.II.F33
ISBN 978-92-1-120491-9

Integrated International Transport and Logistics System for North-East Asia
ST/ESCAP/2434



Activities of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Fourth Statistical Conference of the Americas focuses on Millennium Development Goals and Census

The design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of public policies generate new challenges for national statistical programmes, for which high-quality, timely and relevant statistics are increasingly useful and seen as a highly valued public good. In order to progress towards the generation of better and more comparable indicators in the region, the Fourth Statistical Conference of the Americas was organized by the Statistical Conference of the Americas, a subsidiary body of ECLAC, from 25 to 27 July 2007. Representatives of 28 ECLAC member countries participated, as well as delegations from specialized United Nations agencies, regional organizations and international bodies.

Discussion focused on the growing significance of statistical development issues in the region, connected to the increased demand for information, the need to make government decision-making processes more effective and efficient, and to improve control and evaluation. One central theme was the adoption of the final proposal for the Strategic Plan 2005-2015, which defines the mission, vision, strategic objectives, specific objectives and activities where the Conference must concentrate through 2015. This deadline coincides with the MDGs, which represent a great challenge for the region's national statistical offices in developing an appropriate information system for monitoring these objectives. The conference also coincides with preparations for the Census Round of 2010, as well as the implementation of national accounts in all of the region's countries and the revision scheduled for 2008. These common challenges will open opportunities for synergy in regional and international cooperation.

International panorama remains favourable to Latin American and Caribbean trade

While the pace of growth in trade and the world economy continues to surpass the average registered over the past 20 years, latent risk factors exist. Nevertheless, the Latin American and Caribbean region is less vulnerable today than in the past, given its current account surpluses, large international reserves, lower levels of external indebtedness, sounder fiscal positions and more flexible exchange-rate policies.

This dynamic global scenario favours Latin American and Caribbean international trade, which should see its exports grow in terms of value, according to estimates made by ECLAC in its report "Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Economy 2006; Trends, 2007" released on 22 August 2007. ECLAC notes that exports from the region should increase by 13 per cent in value and 6 per cent in volume in 2007, while imports should increase by 17 per cent in value and 11 per cent in volume. Export growth, which should result in a trade surplus of US\$56 billion, will remain heavily influenced by high prices of commodities, especially metals and fuels.

According to the report, as a result of the favourable international cycle, the economic boom now underway in Latin America and the Caribbean opens a window of opportunity to lay the foundations for sustained medium-term growth by making investments in infrastructure, innovation and human capital that can add greater value and knowledge to its exports and generate more stable conditions for growth and progress towards equity.

Improving responses to climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean

Confronting climate change is a global challenge that involves many actors, approaches and new technologies. But navigating between the variety of existing measures and strategies can be a difficult task for policymakers. To raise awareness of national experiences and help decision-makers, UN-ECLAC, the Dutch company Energeia, and the British Department for International Development held a special workshop from 10 to 11 July 2007, entitled "Scaling up responses to climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean". The goal was to analyse how countries' domestic policies, the new investment frameworks of international financial institutions, and developments in the international climate regime and carbon markets can better support each other.

The workshop explored opportunities for improving responses to climate change and reducing vulnerability to disasters. This includes anticipating the speed and magnitude of changing patterns of production and resource use, international trade, fiscal policy and other economic aspects. It equally involves mitigation efforts, such as analysing changes in domestic consumption patterns and carbon pricing, and expanding the ways countries evaluate projects in infrastructure, agriculture and transportation.

This workshop, which included government participants' interaction with civil society, sought to facilitate progress in sync with the Monterrey Process, the Gleneagles Dialogue, the Club de Madrid consultations and other international processes, allowing discussion among countries and other participants in a non-negotiation environment.

President of El Salvador speaks at ECLAC on international trade



The President of the Republic of El Salvador, Mr. Elías Antonio Saca González, visited ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile, on 6 July 2007, to address the regional commission with a presentation entitled "A Vision of the Future of El Salvador: Trade Opening as an Instrument of Development". President Saca was accompanied by an official delegation of Salvadoran government authorities and diplomats. Also attending the conference were Chilean government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of international institutions and leading members of the political, academic and business communities.

UN-ECLAC has conducted numerous studies, projects and cooperation missions in El Salvador, including evaluation of natural disasters, studies on the impact of trade liberalization in public finances, on energy issues, macroeconomic policy monitoring models, training for bank officials and the provision of sectoral data through the Agricultural Information System. In addition, the capital city of San Salvador will be the venue, in November 2007, of the second eLAC2007 Ministerial Conference on the Information Society, organized by El Salvador in conjunction with ECLAC to review progress on the eLAC2007 Plan of Action for the Information Society, adopted by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2005 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Latin American and Caribbean countries approve Quito Consensus to empower women

The Tenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean concluded with the approval of the Quito Consensus by 33 participating governments. Convened by UN-ECLAC from 6 to 9 August 2007 in Ecuador, the conference is the region's leading intergovernmental forum for the analysis of public policies from a gender perspective.



In the Quito Consensus, countries agree to adopt all necessary affirmative action measures and mechanisms, including legislative reforms and budgetary measures, to ensure the full participation of women in public office and in political representative positions, with a view to achieving parity in the institutional structure of the state (executive, legislative and judicial branches, as well as special and autonomous regimes) and at the national and local levels, as an objective for Latin American and Caribbean democracies.

The document calls upon countries to develop electoral policies of a permanent character that will prompt political parties to incorporate women's agendas in their diversity, the gender perspective in their content, actions and statutes, and the egalitarian participation, empowerment and leadership of women with a view to consolidating gender parity as a policy of state.

The Consensus reaffirms the necessity of adopting measures of co-responsibility in family and working life that apply equally to women and men, bearing in mind that sharing family responsibilities equitably and overcoming gender stereotypes create conditions conducive to women's political participation.

Countries also instruct the Presiding Officers of the Conference to devote one of the meetings they hold each year to an evaluation of the fulfilment of these commitments and agree that at the next session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, scheduled for 2010 in Brazil, a general assessment of progress should be undertaken. They also request that UN-ECLAC, together with other organizations in the United Nations system, create a gender equality observatory.

The full text of the Quito Consensus is posted on the 10th Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean section of the UN-ECLAC website.

Authorities and academics to analyse the need for social cohesion in Latin America

To address the issue of social cohesion, UN-ECLAC and the Ibero-American General Secretariat organized a series of three subregional seminars in Mexico, Colombia and Brazil on the issue "Social Cohesion: Inclusion and a sense of belonging". The first seminar took place at the Secretariat for Foreign Affairs, in the Historic Centre of Mexico City on 30 July 2007. The second seminar was held in Bogotá, Colombia on 1 August 2007, and the third in Brasilia, Brazil, on 3 August 2007.

These seminars, attended by civil servants, academics and other specialists on development issues, seek to open the debate on social cohesion, to culminate at the upcoming Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, to be held in Chile in November 2007.

Foreign Investment in Latin America and the Caribbean 2006

Sales No. E.07.II.G.32

ISBN 978-92-1-121623-3

Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Economy 2006; 2007 Trends

LC/G-2341-P/I – August 2007

CEPAL Review No. 90

LC/G.2323-P-I – ISBN 92-1-121609-5

Visiones del desarrollo en América Latina

LC/L.2756 – ISBN 978-84-87072-82-6

Governabilidad Corporativa, Responsabilidad Social y Estrategias Empresariales en América Latina

(2007) - ISBN 978-958-8307-05-3

Women's contribution to equality in Latin America and the Caribbean

LC/L.2738(CRM.10/3) - August 2007

Social Cohesion: Inclusion and a sense of belonging in Latin America and the Caribbean

LC/G.2335 – May 2007

Activities of the Economic Commission for Africa

France and UNECA begin talks on African development and mutual cooperation

The Foreign Minister of France, Mr. Bernard Kouchner, held broad discussions on 27 July 2007 in Addis Ababa with UNECA's Executive Secretary, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, on various African development issues, including good governance, trade, health and human rights.

During his visit, Mr. Kouchner said he had come to exchange views and underscore France's strong interest in helping Africa to meet its many development challenges.

Mr. Janneh briefed the Minister on Africa's current challenges, including the MDGs, regional integration for development, benefiting from globalization and strengthening of institutions for governance and development. He also informed the Minister of certain recent ECA initiatives in Africa, relating to youth development, management of Africa's natural resources, statistical development, aid for trade and governance, in particular the establishment, in Dakar, Senegal, of the African Governance Institute (AGI), an independent Pan African institute where debates on African governance would take place, knowledge would be shared and gaps addressed.

The Foreign Minister confirmed France's continued support and interest in the activities of ECA.



UNECA and UNEP to collaborate on the economic costs of climate change in Africa

UNECA and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on 23 July 2007 agreed to deepen their collaboration by working together on various environment-related issues in Africa, including the economic costs of climate change and how to finance the transition to a low-carbon economy. The heads of the two organizations, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary of ECA, and Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, also agreed to revise their existing Memorandum of Understanding to cover mutual areas of interests, including environmental statistics, the economics of adaptation, geographical information service and sustainable production and consumption.

Mr. Steiner said he would like ECA and UNEP to pay more attention to the linkages between economics and the environment, adding, "In many respects, the environment is still seen as a tax on development, instead of an investment". Pledging ECA's support, Mr. Janneh said African Ministers of Finance had already pronounced themselves on the issues of climate change and that the work of UNEP could help clarify many thorny questions that the ministers may have. He called on UNEP to play a more active role in the UN regional consultation mechanism in support of the African Union and its NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) programme.

Engaging with Fragile States: Challenges and Opportunities

The Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank hosted a conference on "Engaging with Fragile States: Challenges and Opportunities", in close collaboration with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation and UNECA, on 24 and 25 July 2007 in Addis Ababa.

The aim of the conference was to stimulate discussions among in-country policymakers and bilateral and multilateral development agencies on how best to engage with fragile States, providing governments and donors with a basis for concrete action. About 150-200 key players on fragile States attended, including several Ministers and other high-ranking government officials, members of the diplomatic community, heads and staff of development agencies, and leading representatives of civil society and NGOs.

The Conference identified specific problems as experienced in fragile states, discussed actions that have been successful in addressing them, highlighted approaches

to be avoided, and drew lessons to ensure enhanced development outcomes in fragile States. The sessions sought to provide guidance for each of the different groups of stakeholders in fragile States – governments, donors, and civil society/NGOs.

High-level Meeting on Improved Management of Oil and Gas in Developing Countries

The United Nations Development Programme Special Unit for South-South Cooperation (UNDP-SU/SSC), in collaboration with the State of Qatar and UNECA, convened a high-level meeting from 8 to 10 September 2007 in Doha to assist new oil and gas economies, including in Africa, to effectively use their resource to promote growth and development. The meeting brought together senior government officials and senior executives from about 60 current and prospective oil and gas producing countries around the world.

Participants shared experiences and best practices on the multiple issues associated with the management of the hydrocarbon sector in developing countries including macro-economic concerns and challenges, institutional capacity and forward-planning; management and allocation of oil and gas revenues as well as public-private collaboration and contractual issues. Initiated within the framework of South-South cooperation, the meeting, among other outcomes, developed concrete project proposals to assist low-income countries at various stages of oil and gas exploration to use future revenues for poverty reduction and social development.

Earlier this year in Addis Ababa, ECA and the African Development Bank (AfDB) organized a Big Table on "Managing Africa's Natural Resources for Growth and Poverty Reduction", which brought together African Ministers and their counterparts from OECD countries who are responsible for natural resources management, for informal discussions on how to better manage Africa's natural resources for economic growth and poverty reduction on the continent.

UNECA and UNAIDS forge partnership on long-term HIV/AIDS financing and accountability



On 22 June 2007, UNECA and UNAIDS forged a broad partnership on the development of an accountability index to measure progress and commitment towards universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support in Africa. At a working session led by the Executive Secretary of ECA, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, and the Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS, Mr. Michel Sidibe, the two organizations agreed to work jointly on a donor harmonization agenda, using HIV/AIDS as an entry point, and to mobilize UNECA's Conference of Ministers of Finance on the significance of long-term and sustainable HIV/AIDS financing.

They also agreed to institute a scientific committee to re-actualize and update data in "Securing Our Future", the final report of the Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance (CHGA), which was inaugurated in 2003 by the United Nations Secretary-General. The Commission was charged with addressing the urgent and unique challenges posed by the multiple ways in which HIV/AIDS impacts development and governance in Africa.

The Commission's report, completed in 2006, contains six key messages on the multiplicity of the African epidemic, vulnerability of women, AIDS orphans, prevention strategies, constraints to treatment and care as well as sustainable HIV/AIDS financing. UNECA and UNAIDS decided to conduct a critical analysis on future research agendas emanating from the recommendations and messages in the CHGA report and the modalities for mounting a policy advocacy on them.

Rampant gender-based discrimination slows entrepreneurship among African women, says new study

A two-day workshop held on 18 and 19 June 2007 validated lessons learned from a UNECA study entitled "Lessons from Success Stories of African Women Entrepreneurs". The study calls for "gender-specific allocation of resources so as to develop and boost women's entrepreneurship, beyond micro-credit".

African women's success in entrepreneurship can only be accelerated through policies and programmes which address rampant gender-based discrimination in the formal sector. The study underlines that despite limited government support, negative social environments, discriminatory institutional practices and persistent gender inequalities, African women are still managing enterprises that are creating employment and paying taxes. If African countries are to achieve the MDGs, governments need to address these constraints, focusing on women in particular because they are more adversely affected than men.

The study is based on the experiences of nine randomly selected African women entrepreneurs in Botswana, Burundi, Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda. It identifies some personality traits common to successful women entrepreneurs that include the ability to take risks, creativity, extroversion and openness, optimism and sociableness. The study also says that none of the women entrepreneurs interviewed identified economic gain as the number one indicator of success; rather, their ideology of success embraces honesty, reliability, hard work and the flexibility to spend more time with their family.

ECA selected publications

Economic Report on Africa, 2007

Sales No E.07.II.K.1
ISBN 13: 978-92-1-125104-3

The Role of African Parliaments in the Budgetary Processes, Especially in the Medium Term Expenditure (April 2007)

African Statistical Yearbook, 2006

Sales No E/F.07.II.K.2
ISBN 978-92-1-025162-4

African E-Markets: Information and Economic Development

ISBN 13: 978-9057270598

Economic Conditions in West Africa in 2006 and Prospects for 2007

WAO/ECA 2007

Les économies de l'Afrique centrale 2006

CA/ECA 2007

The African Water Development Report 2006

UN-Water/Africa 2006

Mitigating the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Smallholder Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Livelihoods in Southern Africa

ECA/SA/TPUB/2005/3

Gender Net Issue 4

ACGS - 4

Activities of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Secretary-General Appoints Mr. Bader Al-Dafa of Qatar as Executive Secretary of ESCWA



On 30 July 2007, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Mr. Bader Al-Dafa of Qatar as Executive Secretary of ESCWA. Mr. Al-Dafa has recently served as Ambassador of Qatar to the United States and Permanent Observer to the Organization of American States (OAS). Mr. Al-Dafa has enjoyed a long and distinguished career in foreign affairs and non-governmental services, which has included representing Qatar as Ambassador to the Russian Federation, France, Egypt and Spain. He has also served as the non-resident Ambassador to Finland, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Switzerland and Mexico. Mr. Al-Dafa has also served as Director of the European and American Affairs Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Highlights of Mr. Al-Dafa's service with international NGOs include supervision of programs for building housing for families with limited income in Africa and participation in landmine removal programs in the Balkans. In addition, he has actively participated in fund-raising programs with various children's hospitals that support the social needs of children in Asia and in North America and helped to raise funds and support for the empowerment of women in North Africa and Central Asia. He has also been involved in organizing conferences on democracy and free trade and inter-religious dialogue. Wherever he has served, Mr. Al-Dafa has focused on international arts and culture as a means to build better understanding between the Arab world and the international community.

Fourth Middle East and North Africa Renewable Energy Conference MENAREC 4

UN-ESCWA co-organized "The Fourth Middle East and North Africa Renewable Energy Conference- MENAREC 4" in cooperation with the Syrian Ministry of Electricity and UNEP's Regional Office for Western Asia, with the support of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. The Conference was held in Damascus and Palmyra, Syria from 21 to 24 June 2007.

The main theme of the conference was "The Way Forward for Renewable Energy (RE) Development and Technology Transfer, EU-MENA Cooperation". The conference covered topics on renewable energy (RE) resources; potential and prospects in the MENA Region, state-of-the-art of RE and energy efficiency technologies, enhancing MENA-EUROPE RE cooperation initiatives and technology transfer, policies, legislations, financing and awareness tools, and for promoting RE applications in the MENA Region.

Delegations and representatives from 38 countries, among them 19 national and international organizations, 15 ministers, 7 of them from Europe and MENA countries, participated in the Conference, including the former chancellor of Germany, Mr. Gerhard Schröder. Participants approved the Damascus Declaration, which focused on the need to diversify energy resources, to set national targets for redeployment, and to support the use of all forms of RE, as well as the need for developed countries to scale up their technical and financial assistance to MENA countries for RE programs including technology transfer.

Cairo hosts UN-ESCWA meeting on regional water management

On 30 and 31 July 2007, Cairo hosted a workshop organized by UN-ESCWA on "Evaluation and Adaptation of Existing Water Visions and Forecasts for Shared Aquifer Management in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Region (MEDA)", which includes Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and Palestine (Gaza and the West bank). Participants were representatives of water management institutions in selected MEDA countries as well as from the UN-ESCWA, UNECA and UNECE regions.

The meeting was the third workshop held within the scope of an interregional project implemented by UN-ESCWA in collaboration with UNECA, UNECE, UNESCO and UN-DESA. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of water management institutions in the Mediterranean region with a view to implementing sustainable forms of utilization, management and protection of shared groundwater resources. The project thus contributes to the reduction and prevention of conflicts between countries sharing the same aquifer system and also contributes to water sustainability and the availability of water for drinking and food production.

Participants reviewed a comprehensive study on the issue of water visions and forecasts for shared aquifers management in the MEDA region, intended to assist various groups and stakeholders in managing shared groundwater resources in that region. The study particularly addressed stakeholders who are not water sector professionals and who often find it difficult to understand what the issues are and the seriousness of the risks associated with the increasing overdraft of the resources. The report is designed to assist politicians and other policymakers to realize the urgent need to prepare comprehensive policies and strategies in order to ensure establishing sustainable development, based on the prevailing conditions.

Interregional Seminar on the Economic Assessment of International Transport Linkages and Transport Facilitation

Under the patronage of the Egyptian Minister of Transport, Mohammad Mansour, UN-ESCWA held an "Interregional Seminar on the Economic Assessment of International Transport Linkages and on Transport Facilitation" in Cairo, from 26 to 28 June 2007. The Seminar, organized in cooperation with UNECE, UNESCAP and UNECA, was attended by concerned representatives of the private and public sectors in UN-ESCWA member countries as well as delegates from Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Djibouti and other African countries. Delegates from the International Federation of Road Transport and the Islamic Bank for Development also participated in the meeting. The seminar was intended to strengthen national capacities in assessing the economic feasibility of alternative interregional transport linkages; and to strengthen national capacities in introducing transport facilitation practices in general, and simplifying border crossing procedures along the priority interregional transport linkages.

The Seminar is part of the United Nations Development Account Project "Capacity-building through cooperation in developing interregional land and land-sea transport linkages", jointly implemented by the regional commissions, with UN-ESCWA as coordinator. The UN-ESCWA region participating countries in the Project include: Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. The objective of the Project is to assist member countries of the regional commissions in developing interregional transport linkages and to facilitate interregional transport, trade and tourism.

UN-ESCWA discusses the establishment of a UN Arabic Language Centre

UN-ESCWA held an expert group meeting in Beirut on 2 and 3 May 2007 to consider the establishment of a United Nations Arabic Language Centre. The meeting, the first to be held on the subject, reviewed key activities implemented by UN-ESCWA in this regard and decided on future activities to be organized in cooperation with the United Nations Secretariat.

The meeting was attended by representatives of Conference Services and Arabic Translation Services at UN Headquarters and other duty stations, UN organizations and specialized agencies, in addition to language experts and specialists as well as representatives of translation schools and specialized research institutes.

It discussed issues related to the establishment of a United Nations Arabic Language Centre and its role in improving the quality and use of the Arabic language in United Nations documents in response to requests by Arab Member States and in implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The meeting reviewed the preliminary feasibility study that UN-ESCWA commissioned on the establishment of the Centre and sought the views, comments and suggestions of the participants. Participants also discussed the issue of terminology coordination in United Nations documents and the role of the proposed Centre in this regard, and explored ways to raise the level of the language used in technical documents and improve the ability to express in Arabic the emerging concepts in the various scientific and technological fields, taking into consideration the specificity of the Arabic language.

Subregional workshop on gender mainstreaming for Gulf countries

In accordance with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA), ESCWA continues its efforts to assist its Member States in gender mainstreaming their strategies, plans and projects. In response to the requests of the different Member States, ESCWA held a subregional training workshop to assist in building the capacity of the staff of the national machineries for women of Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE, Oman, Yemen and Qatar.

The three-day subregional workshop, held in May 2007 in Amman, Jordan, focused on how to mainstream the work of the different line ministries, while concentrating on the basic concepts of gender and gender analysis. The training referred to application of international methods in strategic planning.

Estimates and Forecasts for GDP Growth in the ESCWA Region 2006-2007

E/ESCWA/EAD/2007

Economic Trends and Impacts : Foreign Aid and Development in the Arab Region - Issue No. 4

E/ESCWA/EAD/2007/1

Social and Economic Situation of Palestinian Women, 2000-2006

E/ESCWA/ECW/2007

Guidelines for the Formulation and Implementation of ICT Strategy

E/ESCWA/ICTD/2007/2

Population Ageing in Arab Countries

E/ESCWA/SDD/2007

Compendium of Environment Statistics in the ESCWA Region

E/ESCWA/SCU/2007/2



Regional Perspectives on Addressing Climate Change

The United Nations Secretary-General has highlighted the need to find a global response to climate change as the most urgent of problems. The risks posed by climate change are fast becoming the most pressing concerns throughout the world. The Secretary-General has also appealed to all countries to do their utmost to reach a new comprehensive agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process by 2009, and have it in force by the time the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012.

The Regional Commissions, as the regional arms of the United Nations in the economic, social and sustainable development fields, share the responsibility to support the efforts to promote a global consensus in dealing with the monumental challenges emanating from climate change, especially on issues and concerns of a regional nature.

From the standpoint of the Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) some of the main challenges in that region are the high level of vulnerability, low capacity to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change and high poverty levels. Africa needs greater access to funding and assistance, matched with enhancing and promoting climate change mitigation and adaptation concerns into priority development plans, including poverty reduction strategies.

For the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), there is a huge potential for energy savings and for improving energy efficiency in the region. These objectives can be achieved through existing resources and technologies. Many countries are planning to take significant steps to control greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. However, UNECE feels that detailed plans for implementing measures are often lacking.

According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), the region needs to improve its preparedness to deal with the effects of climate change. Numerous measures have been implemented by Governments, such as the establishment of designated national authorities, diversification and decentralization of actors at the local level, with the participation of the social and private sectors, and information sharing discussions.

For the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), climate action, in the context of rising oil prices, has become increasingly compatible with that region's economic development goals, such as energy security and industrial competitiveness. Addressing the challenge requires integrating climate change policies into national development plans and promoting the change to more sustainable consumption and production patterns, as well as to coastal zone management and agricultural practices.

According to the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), the impact of climate change on the Arab world has not been fully examined due to an inadequate level of information and lack of capacity to integrate criteria of vulnerability and adaptation into the development planning process. That region holds great potential for carbon capture and storage projects.

The Regional Commissions have also developed approaches to the evaluation of the economic and social impacts of climate change, complemented with the analysis of its environmental impacts. These approaches are intended to facilitate the assessment of the overall consequences of climate change for sustainable development, particularly from a regional perspective.

The Regional Commissions attach importance to facilitating regional dialogues to promote greater awareness and innovative development policy options to respond to the climate change challenges, including ensuring appropriate financing sources in a manner consistent with a low-carbon, energy-efficient future. In all these areas, the Commissions can achieve synergy with other multilateral and regional fora, including the UNFCCC and its technical body.

The Convention on Biological Diversity and the Regional Commissions

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which came into force in 1993, is dedicated to promoting sustainable development. Conceived as a practical tool for translating the principles of Agenda 21 into reality, the Convention recognizes that biological diversity is about more than plants, animals and micro-organisms and their ecosystems – it is about people and their need for food security, medicines, clean air and water, shelter, and a clean and healthy environment in which to live.

Climate change is emerging as the single greatest threat to biodiversity. Biodiversity conservation and maintenance of ecosystem integrity are essential to the reduction of people's vulnerability to climate change and to the achievement of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADG), including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

With less than three years remaining, the 2010 target to reverse the rate of biodiversity loss looks increasingly elusive. If anything, the rate of extinction is accelerating.

The Regional Commissions included some relevant aspects, such as regional figures on the rate of deforestation, in their Reports on the MDGs. According to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), poverty across the region has meant continued loss of forests and other precious environmental resources. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the proportion of land covered by forest is estimated to have decreased from 29.3 per cent in 1990 to 27.1 per cent in 2000. Average deforestation for North Africa remained constant at 1 per cent over the decade. Others lost as much as 33 per cent of their forest coverage. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) reports that between 1990 and 2000, the proportion of land area covered by forest decreased from 50.4 per cent to 48 per cent in Latin America, but increased slightly (from 24.4 per cent to 25 per cent) in the Caribbean.



The figures pointed to a total deforested area of 46.7 million hectares, or an average annual deforestation rate of 0.5 per cent, more than double the world average. In the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) region, over the period 1990-2000, in the 48 countries reporting data the proportion of land forested increased in 13 countries, remained unchanged in 17 and decreased in 18. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) reports that forests cover 3.4 per cent of the total land area in the Arab region. The Arab Least Developed Countries experienced a 19 per cent decrease in forest coverage between 1990 and 2000.

At the Third Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, held in Curitiba, Brazil, from 13 to 17 March 2006, a roadmap to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss and save life on Earth by 2010 was adopted. To achieve this target, 122 Ministers in charge of the environment have had, for the first time, an interactive dialogue which facilitated the adoption of 30 major decisions, including the agreement on the negotiating framework and firm timeframe to finalize by 2010 the negotiation of an international regime for access and benefit-sharing of genetic resources. Those decisions have started a new era of enhanced implementation of the Convention in which Parties, Governments, relevant organizations and regional bodies have been requested to promote coordination, synergies and partnerships.

The provision of financial, technical and technological support to developing countries for the management of biodiversity at all levels – local, national, subregional, regional and global – and in a timely manner, is essential. In order to foster increased efficiency in the use of available resources, the Regional Commissions and the CBD Secretariat have agreed to cooperate at regional and subregional levels, inter alia on capacity-building for biosafety.

Regional Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

The first five-year cycle of review and appraisal of regional implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), carried out by the regional commissions, provides evidence that developing countries have started to include ageing issues in their national policy planning. However, regional analysis also reveals that enormous challenges confront the ageing population in the regions, according to their specific economic, social and cultural contexts. The analysis also shows that future actions for the implementation of the MIPAA will have to be diverse in the regions, taking into account the different nature of the process of ageing at the regional and subregional levels.

All countries are experiencing changes in their age distribution. However, regional differentials in ageing are substantial, considering that countries are in different stages of the demographic transition and that their socio-economic conditions vary. In Africa, 41 per cent of population is under 15 years of age, and the proportion of people aged 60 years or over is only 5 per cent. Twenty-seven per cent of the population in Asia and the Pacific is younger than 15 and 9.6 per cent of the total population are older persons. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 29 per cent of the total population is younger than 15 years old and persons aged 60 years or older account for 9 per cent of the total population. Conversely, in Oceania only 14 per cent of the population is younger than 15 years old while nearly a quarter (24 per cent) of the population are older adults. Similarly, in Europe the population younger than 15 years old comprises 16 per cent of the total population and older adults represent 21 per cent of the total population. As such, the rate of ageing also varies across the regions. The aged population increases by 3.4 per cent a year in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1.2 per cent in Europe, 3 per cent in Asia and Oceania, and 2.8 per cent in Africa.

Although the population in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania is significantly younger than in Europe and North America, these populations are projected to be ageing faster. This requires that adjustment to demographic change starts early on. Moreover, rapid ageing in these regions is taking place at lower levels of socio-economic development than was the case in the twentieth century in Europe. Such rapid growth of older persons will require major economic and social adjustments in most countries. Governments will have to respond to these new challenges with appropriate policies and programmes to address the needs of the entire society. This will imply changes in perspectives on social protection, human rights and social cohesion. It also points to modifications in intergenerational relationships, confirming the need to strengthen regional cooperation in order to support the capacities of Member States to implement the MIPAA.

Contribution of the Regional Commissions to the regional implementation of MIPAA

Regional Commissions have carried out a range of activities to foster the implementation of MIPAA, including the following: technical assistance to support the creation of regional implementation strategies and the application of the Plan of Action into regional action plans; the coordination of regional review and appraisal activities; and the collection and diffusion of information related to the quality of life of older people. However, the financial and human resources to support the implementation, follow-up and assessment of the MIPAA are insufficient to respond to the increasing demands made by Member States

Regional Commissions have continued strengthening collaboration and coordination for the implementation of MIPAA with other United Nations agencies and partnerships with non-governmental organizations have increased as well to reinforce specific areas of MIPAA. In addition, during 2007 efforts with Member States have been coordinated in order to conduct regional reviews and appraisal activities.

ECLAC has provided technical assistance to countries in the region in developing mechanisms of implementation for the MIPAA and its regional strategy. To strengthen regional and national capacities, the Commission has conducted several courses and workshops, also in collaboration with intergovernmental agencies and institutions.

ECLAC has provided technical support to respond to Member States specific implementation needs, such as country analysis of census data on ageing; country assessment for the elaboration of national policy on ageing, development of technical material, such as the Handbook of indicators of the quality of life of older persons and the Guide for the participative assessment of the programmes for older people. The Second Regional Conference on Ageing to review and appraise national activities in the implementation of MIPAA and its regional strategy will be held in Brasilia, from 4 to 6 December 2007, organized by ECLAC in collaboration with the Government of Brazil. ECLAC activities are permanently supported by UNFPA.

In special reference to the coordination of activities on ageing, ECA is actively engaged, in partnership with DESA and other regional commissions, in endeavours leading to the review and appraisal of the MIPAA. It has participated in activities organized by DESA, for DESA and the regional commissions to chart out the modalities for the review and appraisal. In this regard, ECA is producing a comprehensive report on ageing in Africa in 2007. This report, together with ten test case reports from selected countries based on the bottom-up approach will be presented to and discussed during an expert group meeting. The outcome of the meeting will be a more consolidated follow-up report on MIPAA in Africa.

The first five-year cycle of review and appraisal of MIPAA in the ECE region will conclude with the Ministerial Conference on Ageing scheduled to take place from 6 to 8 November 2007 in León, Spain. The Ministerial Conference will consider the findings of national reviews, share experiences and good practice and identify priorities for future action in the form of a ministerial declaration. To support the regional implementation process, the secretariat has organized a meeting of national focal points on ageing, a capacity building workshop for ageing-related work by governmental and UNFPA focal points in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia and a meeting of the expert group jointly with the Task Force for Monitoring the Regional Implementation Strategy.

In light of its mandate to strengthen the integration of population factors in regional development planning efforts, ESCAP also held a series of training workshops on the nexus between persistent low fertility and increasing longevity, a combination that creates ageing societies. The primary objective of these training workshops was to provide national planners and policymakers with a better understanding of the inter-linkages between population variables, poverty and development, and why it was important to develop a strategic poverty reduction policy that integrates population concerns—such as ageing—with development. Since 2004, ESCAP and UNFPA collaborated in conducting three subregional training workshops, with a fourth to be organized in September 2007, as well as a national workshop with the Government of Myanmar.

ESCWA continues to organize and participate in relevant meetings/conferences at the regional and international levels. Through a number of advocacy and capacity building meetings on the changing age structure of the population, ESCWA continues to advocate, support and strengthen population and ageing related development goals. Currently ESCWA will organize the regional seminar to observe, five years after MIPAA declaration that will review and monitor the progress made at the country level, stocktaking lessons learned at the regional level.



Future actions for the implementation of MIPAA at regional level

The information provided by Regional Commissions highlights that the implementation of MIPAA at regional level is primarily linked with the increase of the provision of social security coverage for older persons and their families. To achieve health and social well-being into old age, greater emphasis should be placed on guaranteeing income security and universal and equal access to basic health care service for older adults.

Ageing should be integrated more strongly into development policies at regional, national and local levels. Although the countries where ageing is an established trend have given attention to the needs of older persons, in other regions of the world, population ageing and its social and economic consequences are not receiving the attention they deserve from policymakers. As it has been mentioned in prior reports, as in General Assembly resolutions, there has been limited attention to the ageing concerns in the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals and the 2005 World Summit. Although the objective to reduce poverty by half by 2015 and many other objectives have an inherent intergenerational character, it is fundamental to take into account and consider both the social and economic repercussions of demographic ageing, as well as the needs of older persons in order to reach the Millennium Development Goals.



ECE selected meetings**2007****10-12 October**

The Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, Serbia)

5-8 November

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

19-20 November

Meeting of Signatories to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment

3-12 December

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

2008**24-25 January**

Multidisciplinary Expert Group on Inland Transport Security

9-11 April

ECE/UNODC Meeting on Crime Statistics

ESCAP selected meetings**2007****18-23 October**

Third Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

12 November

Second Session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Trade (Berlin, Germany)

14-16 November

2nd Meeting of the Working Group on the Asian Highway and Asian Highway Investment Forum

13-15 November

Second Expert Group Meeting on Interregional Cooperation to Strengthen Social Inclusion, Gender Equality and Health Promotion in the MDG Process

12-14 December

Committee on Poverty Reduction, fourth session

2008**April/May**

Sixty-fourth session of the Commission

ECLAC selected meetings**2007****31 October**

Third Plenary Meeting of Macroeconomic Dialogue Network (REDIMA II)

6 November

Second Ministerial Conference on the Information Society eLAC2007 (San Salvador, El Salvador)

28-30 November

International Seminar: France and Latin America – Geopolitics, Security and Sustainability: The Transition Towards a New International Energy Framework

4-6 December

Second Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing (Brasilia, Brazil)

2008**28-31 January**

Regional Seminar on Fiscal Policy (Santiago, Chile)

21-25 July

Thirty-second session of the Commission (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic)

ECA selected meetings**2007****1-5 October**

Regional Training Workshop of National Capacity Building on East Africa on Technologies DNSSEC (Domain Name System Security Extensions) (Kampala, Uganda)

1-5 October

Seminar on Resource Mobilization for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses (RPHC) (Tunis, Tunisia)

28-29 November

Workshop on Policy Analysis Capacity Building for Senior Technical Officials of Finance and Planning Ministries

2008**March/April**

Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, forty-first session of the Commission

March/April

Committee of Experts of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, twenty-seventh meeting

ESCWA selected meetings**2007****23-25 October**

Joint Interregional Seminar between ESCWA, ECE, ESCAP and ECA on Experience Sharing and Lessons Learnt from the Interregional Transport Linkages Project (Dubai)

30 Oct.-1 November

Regional Conference on Land Degradation Issues in the Arab Region (Cairo, Egypt)

7-8 November

Arab Regional Seminar on the Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (Amman, Jordan)

14-15 November

International Forum on Trade Facilitation and Regional Trade Agreements

20 November

Expert Group Meeting on the External Review of the Annual Review of Developments in Globalization and Regional Integration in the Arab Countries

2008**29-31 January**

Workshop on Incubation Schemes for Digital Arabic Content Development

May

Twenty-fifth session: High-level Officials segment and Ministerial segment

High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development: A Regional Perspective

The High-level Dialogue of the General Assembly on the Follow-up to and Implementation of the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey Consensus) provides an opportunity to assess the progress made, recognize the obstacles and constraints, and identify new challenges, opportunities and emerging issues of concern to developing countries.

Overall, in the past two decades, macroeconomic policy in developing countries and the fiscal position of most developing economies have improved. In spite of this improved performance, low national savings rates and the developing nature of most financial markets present limitations in the mobilization of domestic resources for development purposes. With the exception of some East Asian nations, saving rates in the developing regions are still below 25 per cent and investment rates are below the required levels to sustain poverty reducing growth rates over time.

The Monterrey Consensus asserted that national efforts must be complemented by long term private capital flows. With the exception of Sub-Saharan Africa, net private capital flows constitute the most important source of external finance for all developing regions, representing more than 80 per cent of total net financial flows. Since the adoption of the Monterrey Consensus in 2002, East Asia and the Pacific Region, Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Europe and Central Asia have been the main recipients of foreign direct investment (FDI), totalling approximately 85 per cent of the total. The share of Sub-Saharan Africa is barely 6 per cent and that of South Asia 4 per cent. Those figures cover, however, important variations within the regions and subregions as not all countries have benefited equally from FDI. For instance, in the case of South Asia, India captured 66 per cent of the region's FDI in 2005, while in the case of East Asia, China captured 82 per cent of the subregion total during that same year.

These important variations in FDI flows could only be partially compensated by official development assistance (ODA). This is also because the ODA flows averaged 0.33 per cent of the GNI of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries in 2005, well short of the internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent, notwithstanding an improvement in relative terms since 1997. Recent studies also suggest that despite the debt relief initiatives, the debt situation has deteriorated in 11 out of 13 post-completion Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC).

The challenges highlighted by the shortfalls are a reminder for the international community to double their efforts to meet the commitments under the Monterrey Consensus. Indeed, since Monterrey, a number of important commitments have been made in this regard. In early 2005, the members of the OECD/DAC adopted the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness which sets concrete benchmarks for improving the quality and coherence of ODA. A few months later, Member States of the European Union resolved to reach the 0.7 per cent target of gross national income (GNI) in ODA by 2015, with an interim target of 0.51 per cent by 2010 (0.33 per cent and 0.17 per cent, respectively, in the new EU Member States). The Group of Eight also committed to doubling ODA to Africa by 2010.

Those commitments and the broader Monterrey commitments will need to be strictly adhered to over the coming years in order to consolidate progress in the fight against poverty and hunger, and to move forward closer to the achievement of other MDGs by 2015. A critical area for opening up significant new opportunities for development will depend on the success of the Doha development round of multilateral trade negotiations.

Progress has also been made in some areas regarding the inclusion and participation of developing countries in international decision-making bodies. Strengthening regional institutions is vital to foster such progress and to ensure coherence, coordination, and cooperation in promoting sustainable and equitable economic policies. Particularly important in this context is the further promotion of South-South cooperation, as well as regional and subregional financial cooperation, such as regional reserve fund schemes and development banks.

Equally critical is staying engaged with major stakeholders at the global, regional, subregional and national levels through continued discussions of issues relevant to the Financing for Development follow-up process. The Regional Commissions have undertaken a leading role, in cooperation with major regional stakeholders and financial institutions, in organizing follow-up activities to the International Conference on Financing for Development in their respective regions. Such activities have raised awareness of the aims of the Monterrey Consensus and facilitated the adopting of policies and regulations that promote development finance to meet the MDGs in the regions. The Commissions are committed to remain active partners in the promotion of and follow-up to the Monterrey Consensus.

Regional Commissions Home Pages

ECE: www.unece.org

ESCAP: www.unescap.org

ECLAC: www.eclac.cl

ECA: www.uneca.org

ESCWA: www.escwa.org.lb

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For information on publications of the Regional Commissions, or for any other matter relating to the newsletter, please contact:

**Regional Commissions
New York Office
Room S-3127, United Nations
New York, NY 10017
Tel.: (212) 963-6905
Fax: (212) 963-1500
e-mail: rcnyo@un.org**