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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

14th Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) for the Arab States
Beirut, 11-12 November 2010

THEMATIC WORKING GROUP ON MDGS

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Key Summary of Achievements/Developments in 2010

- The LAS-UN Joint Arab MDGs report titled as “The Third Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises”.
- Regional Consultative Meeting on the attainment of the MDGs in the Arab Region titled: “Senior Officials Meeting of the Arab Ministers Council for Social Affairs”, (LAS Secretariat, Cairo, 9-10 June 2010):
 - Peer review of the report
 - Preparatory meeting for the MDGs +10 Summit. .
- The endorsement of “The Third Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises” by the Substantive Session of the Arab Ministers of Social Affairs titled “Social gaps with respect to the Millennium Development Goals” (LAS Secretariat, Cairo, 30 June 2010).

Key Challenges Affecting Implementation

A- Challenges facing the work of TWG:

- Tight Deadlines, some agencies believed that more time should be given to them to provide inputs/ comments. **Proposed Action:** provide a timeline for the preparations of the coming MDGs report so agencies can plan commitments and prepare inputs
- Coordination among contributing agencies: Late delivery of input from some agencies. **Proposed Action:** provide a timeline for the preparations of the coming MDGs report so agencies can have enough time to prepare their inputs
- Data issues: accuracy and lack of recent data and information. There was a conflict between data from national sources compared to international ones. **Proposed Action:** decide among participants on the TWG and the drafting committee at the outset on a cut-off date and whether national or international sources of data should be used.
- Changing representations of technical members. Some countries and UN agencies kept changing representations, and the suggestion here is to the extent possible have tasked members who could stay throughout the process. **Proposed Actions:** (1) provide a timeline for the preparations of the coming MDGs report so agencies can plan commitments and prepare inputs, (2) agencies provide a focal point and an alternate focal point.
- Working with both languages was an issue: This caused some agencies to spend a substantial amount of time on translating as there are some non- Arab speakers working on the report and other related activities. This is why a decision should be reached on working language for agencies to assign appropriate personnel. **Proposed Action:** further discussion with TWG on whether the working language of the draft should be English and once finalized the draft will be translated into Arabic.

B- Challenges facing the attainment of the MDGs:**A- For the work of the TWG on MDGs:**

- Absence of real action plan of the TWG;
- Limited resources;
- Competing priorities within each agency;
- Multitude of demands on TWG members;
- Lack of coordination with other TWGs since there is interdependency between the attainment of the MDGs, food crisis and climate change. In addition, to other unpredictable force-majeure(s) example: wars, economic crises (as in 2008), natural catastrophes, etc.

B- For the report and the work of the drafting committee:

- Data issues (national versus international);
- Sub-regional classifications as well as lack of UN harmonized regional and subregional grouping;
- Disharmony of contributions coming from different agencies; establish comprehensible guidelines to be followed by all contributors;
- Inherent difficulties associated with drafting by a committee.

C- Lessons learnt:

- Sufficient time required to Arab countries and members of the TWG for revisions and contributions;
- Realistic time plan and methodology for the preparation of the report;
- The need to hire one high level expert to consolidate the various inputs of agencies into one harmonized consolidated report;
- The need to resolve data controversial issues.

Amendments to the TWG Workplan

Were any significant amendments made to the workplan? If so what were they?

- The change of the theme of the report from “the International Financial Crisis” to “***the Global Economic Crises***”.
- The launch of the report was decided to be during the MDG +10 Summit but due to the tight schedule of the High Level Officials attending the Summit which would not secure the appropriate audience, it was agreed with LAS to organize an appropriate regional launch similar to what other regions did. The LAS has proposed to host the launch event in its headquarters in Cairo. Therefore, the launch has been decided to be on 12 December 2010 during the 30th session of the Arab Ministers Council for Social Affairs that will take place at LAS headquarter (Cairo, 12-13 December 2010).

2010 Workplan Implementation Progress

No.	Key Activity	Main Output	Status of Implementation	Expected Completion Date
1	Regional Consultative Meeting on the attainment of the MDGs in the Arab Region titled: "Senior Officials Meeting of the Arab Ministers Council for Social Affairs", (LAS Secretariat, Cairo, 9-10 June 2010).	Report of the meeting including decisions related to the finalization of the LAS-UN Joint MDGs Report 2010 and the MDG +10 Summit.	Implemented	N/A
2	Substantive Session of the Arab Ministers of Social Affairs titled "Social gaps with respect to the Millennium Development Goals" (LAS Secretariat, Cairo, 30 June 2010).	Endorsement of the LAS-UN MDGs Report 2010 (as detailed in the decisions of Ministerial session).	Implemented. Decisions of session available at: http://www.escwa.un.org/rcm/editor/Download.asp?table_name=rcm_themes&field_name=id&FileID=203	N/A
3	LAS-UN joint Arab MDGs report titled " <i>The Third Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises</i> ".	The report both in Arabic and English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English version is in the printing process. Soft Copy available at: http://www.escwa.un.org/rcm/editor/Download.asp?table_name=rcm_themes&field_name=id&FileID=198 Arabic version is under final editing and design. 	End of October 2010
4	The Launch of " <i>The Third Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises</i> ".	High level Arab regional meeting to launch the report: 12 December 2010, during 30 th session of the Arab Ministers Council for Social Affairs (Cairo, 12-13 December 2010).	In progress	12 December 2010

ANNEXES

A : TWG Meetings 2010

B: TWG Terms of Reference

C: 2010 Workplan of the TWG

ANNEX A - TWG Meetings

Date	Location	Meeting Report Available Online (RCM Website)	Any Comments
23 July 2009	Beirut	Prepared by the convener of TWG on Arab MDGs	<u>1st Meeting of TWG:</u> The meeting was held to discuss and approve the main theme of the "LAS-UN Joint Regional Report on MDGs in the Arab Region, 2009/2010"; the draft Action Plan of the TWG; and the TOR and the budget for the TWG on Arab MDGs.
11 December 2009	Beirut	Prepared by the convener of TWG on Arab MDGs	<u>2nd Meeting of TWG:</u> The meeting was held to discuss the way to proceed in producing the LAS-UN joint MDGs report 2010 by setting deadlines for lead agencies to deliver the second drafts of the MDGs chapters in the report.
10 June 2010	Cairo	Prepared by the convener of TWG on Arab MDGs Available at:	<u>3rd Meeting of TWG:</u> The meeting was held to agree on the way to proceed in producing the LAS-UN joint MDGs after it was discussed at the Senior Officials Meeting of the Arab Ministers Council for Social Affairs (9-10 June 2010)
30 June 2010	Cairo	Prepared by the convener of TWG on Arab MDGs	<u>4th Meeting of TWG:</u> The meeting's purpose was to prepare for the discussions on the respective chapters of the report with the ministers during the regular session of the Arab Ministers Council for Social Affairs (LAS Secretariat, Cairo, 30 June 2010) and the way forward after the Ministerial session.
10 November 2010	Beirut	Prepared by the convener of TWG on Arab MDGs	<u>5th Meeting of TWG:</u> The meeting will be held to review the preparations for the 14th RCM in addition to further discuss and elaborate the next steps of the TWG

23 July 2010	Beirut	Prepared by the convener of TWG on Arab MDGs	<u>1st meeting of the Drafting group:</u> The meeting's purpose was to agree on the responsibilities of the drafting committee and the set the way forward to achieve them.
11 December 2009	Beirut	Prepared by the convener of TWG on Arab MDGs	<u>2nd meeting of the Drafting group:</u> The meeting was held to discuss how to proceed in the preparations of the LAS-UN joint MDGs report 2010 after the first draft was submitted.
19-24 February 2010	Beirut	Prepared by the convener of TWG on Arab MDGs Decisions of meeting available at: http://www.escwa.un.org/rcm/editor/Download.asp?table_name=rcm_themes&field_name=id&FileID=185	<u>3rd Meeting of the Drafting Group:</u> The purpose of this extensive meeting was to review the revised zero draft chapters prepared by the respective lead agencies and then to consolidate them in order to reach a consistent and coherent zero draft of the report.
11-13 June 2010	Cairo	Prepared by the convener of TWG on Arab MDGs	<u>4th meeting of the drafting committee:</u> The meeting was held for the purpose of revising the Arabic draft Report based on the comments received from the Senior Officials Meeting and from the 3rd Meeting of the TWG, and then to agree on the steps to be taken to reach a final draft that will be presented to the upcoming meeting of the Arab Ministers Council for Social Affairs (Cairo, 30 June 2010) for adoption at the Ministerial level
20 June 2010	Teleconference meeting	No	<u>5th meeting of the Drafting Group:</u> The meeting was set to discuss the finalization of the final Arabic draft of the report that will be presented in the meeting of the Arab Ministers Council for Social Affairs.
2-3 August 2010	Cairo	No	<u>6th meeting of the Drafting Group:</u> This meeting was held to finalize the English version of the report after incorporating the necessary modifications to match the Arabic version which was endorsed by the Arab ministers of social affairs.

ANNEX B - TWG Terms of Reference (Proposed Action Plan)

During the 5th meeting of the TWG on MDGs in the Arab region (Beirut, 10 November 2010) the following inquiry was raised by the convener:

Should the main objective of the TWG on the MDGs only revolve around the coordination of the production of “a publication” or should the TWG on the MDGs contribute more substantially in order to achieve the MDGs in the Arab Region?

- **A discussion took place and the TOR to be maintained.**

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ANNEX C - 2010 Workplan of the TWG Remaining Activities till end 2010

No.	Key Activity	Status of Implementation	Expected Completion Date
1	LAS-UN joint Arab MDGs report titled " <i>The Third Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises</i> ".	Implemented: The report has been printed in English and Arabic and ready to be launched officially.	End of October 2010
2	The 5 th meeting of the TWG on MDGs in the Arab region: Preparation for the 14 th RCM and for the launch of the 3 rd Arab MDGs Report.	Implemented	10 November 2010
3	The Launch of " <i>The Third Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises</i> ".	In progress	12 December 2010