

**JIU/NOTE/2002/2**  
**ORIGINAL: ENGLISH**

**UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM REGIONAL PRESENCE AND  
COORDINATION: THE CASE OF ARAB COUNTRIES**

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**United Nations**  
**Geneva, 2002**



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**ACRONYMS**

<b>ACC</b>	Administrative Committee on Coordination (now CEB)
<b>AFESD</b>	Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development
<b>AGFUND</b>	Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CCA</b>	Common Country Assessment
<b>CEB</b>	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (formerly ACC)
<b>DPI</b>	Department of Public Information
<b>ECA</b>	Economic Commission for Africa
<b>EMRO</b>	WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
<b>ESCWA</b>	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>IATF</b>	Inter-Agency Task Force
<b>ICAO</b>	International Civil Aviation Organization
<b>ICPD</b>	International Conference on Population and Development
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technologies
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IMO</b>	International Maritime Organization
<b>ITU</b>	International Telecommunication Union
<b>JIU</b>	Joint Inspection Unit
<b>LAS</b>	League of Arab States
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>RCF</b>	Regional Cooperation Framework
<b>RCG</b>	Regional Coordination Group
<b>RICG</b>	Regional Inter-agency Coordination Group
<b>ROWA</b>	UNEP Regional Office for West Asia
<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>UNDG</b>	United Nations Development Group
<b>UNDGEXCOM</b>	United Nations Development Group Executive Committee
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNIDO</b>	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
<b>UNIFEM</b>	United Nations Development Fund for Women
<b>UNRWA</b>	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WSSD</b>	World Summit on Sustainable Development

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: OBJECTIVE, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*The objective of this note is to look into the United Nations system organizations' regional presence in the Arab countries, assess mechanisms of coordination of their activities at the regional level and examine ways of enhancing them.*

A. There are a substantial number of regional offices of United Nations system organizations in the Arab countries and a critical mass of expertise and specializations within each organization and among them.

B. While there is increasing cooperation and coordination among United Nations system organizations at the country level through the resident coordinator system and through instruments such as the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), cooperation and coordination among these organizations at the regional level, in support of the countries in the region, are lagging behind.

C. There is no single framework, either United Nations or otherwise, such as that of CCA or UNDAF that would encompass United Nations organizations' responses and activities to demands and needs for regional or intercountry programmes and projects.

D. On the other hand, a strategic developmental vision and priority setting for the region can be discerned from intergovernmental forums of the regional organizations such as the League of Arab States (LAS) and its organs in the first instance and from the United Nations system organizations including world conferences, the Millennium Declaration and from the legislative organs of the different United Nations organizations.

E. At the regional level and as outposts for the United Nations in their respective regions and as empowered by the United Nations General Assembly and Economic and Social Council, the Regional Commissions have a critical leadership role in coordination at the regional level among the various United Nations system organizations with due regard to the specific mandates and activities of specialized agencies and funds and programmes.

F. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has been convening the

Regional Coordination Group (RCG) in pursuance of Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46 to enhance coordination of the United Nations system inputs at the regional level. This mechanism for cooperation and coordination needs strengthening.

G. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Cooperation Framework for Arab States (RCF), is the closest framework within the United Nations system to encompass partnerships within the system and with regional organizations. This framework could benefit from more participation and further inclusiveness.

H. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) is one forum that is not adequately utilized for cooperation and coordination at the regional level. The work of UNDG on rationalization, simplification and harmonization of procedures relating to finance, administration of personnel and in particular, simplification of the programme process at the country level could be extended and or modified to benefit processes at the regional level.

I. Attempts and plans of governments and regional organizations towards economic cooperation and integration of the region and the development of strategies and priority-setting within an agreed-upon general framework are a matter to which the United Nations system could contribute. Cooperation of the United Nations system organizations and their response to the needs of the region and coordination of their inputs within that framework are essential.

J. No meeting among all the heads of the different regional United Nations offices in the region has been recorded. A culture of cooperation and solidarity among these offices is to be encouraged.

## **1. The Regional Coordination Group**

RCG, chaired by ESCWA, is the main existing mechanism for cooperation and coordination of United Nations system organization activities at the regional level. Its membership includes all United Nations system organizations represented in the region or otherwise. The scope for cooperation and coordination could range from information-sharing, to follow-up on world conferences, to identification of and follow up on joint activities involving two or more organizations. It could serve as a forum for priority setting for the region within the framework of intergovernmental legislations and directives. RCG is at the developmental stage and needs to be strengthened at different levels and commitments.

### **Meetings of the Regional Coordination Group**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

**The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations together with the Executive Secretary of ESCWA, in pursuance of Economic and Social Council resolution 98/46, should call for an exceptional meeting of RCG to which all United Nations system organizations should be invited and in particular heads of regional offices in the region, directors of regional bureaux and/or chiefs of regional divisions in headquarters of United Nations system organizations, as well as the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), to build upon the previous meeting of March 1999 and ensure the involvement and commitment of participants at the highest level of authority. In particular this meeting could further discuss:**

- (a) Assessment of existing mechanisms and their enhancement;**
- (b) Formulation of a collective regional strategy based on a limited number of critical issues;**
- (c) Identification of intercountry or regional priorities and projects; and**
- (d) Identification of lead agencies and task forces.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

- (a) The heads of regional offices and directors of regional bureaux and/or chiefs of regional divisions in headquarters should contribute to**

**the preparation of the agenda of RCG and its deliberations, increasingly becoming partners and owners of this endeavour and strengthening a culture of a unified United Nations family for the benefit of the countries of the region. They should appoint focal points in their respective organizations to be responsible for all matters pertaining to RCG; and**

- (b) Heads of regional offices could host periodic meetings of RCG at their respective headquarters, especially when the host organization is the lead agency for a topic under discussion.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

**The Executive Secretary of ESCWA, as Chair of RCG and in pursuance of the Commission's lead role in coordination at the regional level, should:**

- (a) Take up the matter directly with other heads of offices to enlist their contributions to the draft agenda of, and participation in, the regular meetings of RCG;**
- (b) Ensure that RCG is efficiently and effectively served through dedicated staff—not necessarily full-time—and on a sustainable basis, including services of the web site; and**
- (c) Agree with other organizations on a tracking system for follow-up and implementation of decisions of RCG which would eventually become part of the web site.**

**The RCG web site:** The web site dedicated to RCG within ESCWA, with the participation of all United Nations system organizations is an important tool as a common database for information-sharing and for future coordination of activities at the regional level.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

- (a) The Executive Secretary of ESCWA should ensure that the RCG web site becomes functional at the earliest possible date and is updated on a continuous basis;**
- (b) Heads of regional offices and other organizations not represented in the field and especially the focal points in each organization should ensure that the RCG web site is continuously updated and linked with their respective web sites and in particular with**

aspects that are of relevance for the work of RCG;

(c) The website should eventually be launched in the Arabic, English and French languages.

## 2. UNDP Regional Cooperation Framework

The Bureau of Arab States, UNDP, New York, through the UNDP RCF, is in a unique position to influence the kind of intercountry projects and partnerships within the United Nations system organizations as well as with regional organizations. While this framework is not inclusive it could serve as the major entry point for programming and for cooperation and coordination of the United Nations system organizations' support at the regional level. It is also a framework for partnerships with the regional organizations. It is expected to respond to the priority needs of the region.

### RECOMMENDATION 5

**The Director of the Bureau of Arab States in UNDP should:**

(a) **Continue to ensure that the process of formulating and finalizing RCF be more consultative and participatory—within the United Nations system and with the regional organizations, including international and regional financial institutions—taking advantage of the respective mandates and specializations of the United Nations agencies and their presence in the region;**

(b) **Take advantage of a regular meeting of RCG to enlist suggestions and proposals by other United Nations system organizations for the future RCF and keep the other organizations informed of its development.**

## 3. The United Nations Development Group

UNDG has evolved into a major forum for harmonization of administrative and operational aspects of United Nations system organizations activities. Its membership has grown beyond the funds and programmes to include almost all United Nations system organizations. While it primarily concerns itself with cooperation and coordination at the country level, it also covers coordination at

the regional level as attested by the last meeting of the regional directors in December 2001.

### RECOMMENDATION 6

(a) **The Chairman of UNDG and/or the head of its secretariat should make available to ESCWA as Chair of RCG all relevant decisions and directives affecting harmonization and coordination of administrative and operational activities of its membership. This could also be through the designation of one of the UNDG members attending the RCG meetings or the head of its secretariat to appraise RCG of relevant issues and interact with it.**

(b) **The ESCWA secretariat should become more involved in the deliberations at meetings of UNDG including possibly through the regional commissions' office in New York.**

## 4. Cooperation and coordination with regional organizations

Cooperation and coordination with regional organizations have been a feature of intercountry or regional programming and joint projects in this region. It is either carried out between one United Nations organization and another Arab regional organization or among several on either side. This reflects the similarities in the structures and mandates of the different organizations on both sides. While this note does not attempt to discuss this issue in detail, it can point to possible future steps. More systematic cooperation and coordination have to be developed; between the LAS and its different organs and organizations on one hand, and the United Nations system organizations on the other, especially those with regional offices in the area.

### RECOMMENDATION 7

(a) **The Director of the Bureau of Arab States in UNDP, primarily within the RCF, together with the Executive Secretary of ESCWA and the heads of other regional offices, should make a concerted effort towards more inclusive and harmonized regional programming and identification of intercountry projects;**

(b) **The Executive Secretary of ESCWA should at an appropriate time invite a representative of LAS to participate in the RCG meetings. Representatives of specialized**

**regional organizations and funds could be invited depending on sectoral and other issues of concern to them.**

**5. Coordination at the Field Level**

In the field, there is no machinery corresponding to that of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for inter-agency coordination at the regional level. The resident coordinator system is mainly concerned with coordination at the country level.

**RECOMMENDATION 8**

**The Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of CEB, should bring the question of designating the executive secretaries of the regional commissions, in their respective regions, to assume an inter-agency coordination role at the regional level, similar to his own as Chair of CEB.**



## INTRODUCTION

1. In the Arab region, as is the case in other regions, a number of United Nations system organizations have regional or subregional offices that serve the countries they cover through a range of activities, within their respective mandates, at the national, subregional and regional levels. These organizations include: ESCWA, FAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and others. They cover among them, a wide and differing range of countries: several covering all Arab countries, some covering only a few, while the coverage of others extends beyond the Arab region.

2. Within their respective mandates, their main activities are geared to the country level. Mechanisms for coordination and cooperation of United Nations system organizations at the country level include instruments such as CCA and UNDAF, and within the concept of the resident coordinator system. In 1997, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) prepared a report entitled "Strengthening field representation of the United Nations system".<sup>1</sup> The broad objective of the report was to enhance coordination and cooperation of United Nations system organizations, at the country level, in support of the programme countries in their efforts at capacity-building to achieve self-reliance and sustainable human development, using available resources, both human and financial, more effectively and economically. The report dealt with a number of issues and problems including: division of labour and complementarities among United Nations organizations; mandates and overlapping and the phenomenon of "mandate creep"; the concepts of thematic groups and lead agencies; and other issues that are also found at the regional level. Another JIU report of relevance to the subject was

"Coordination of policy and programming frameworks for more effective development cooperation".<sup>2 3</sup>

3. This Note continues the task but focuses on coordination at the regional level. No United Nations system framework for regional cooperation and coordination such as that of UNDAF exists. The Note attempts to assess existing coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system organizations, at the regional level, and examines ways of enhancing them for the benefit of, and in cooperation with, the countries and organizations of the region. It does not deal with substantive programmatic issues although it points to the importance of strategic planning and priority setting as well as partnership among the United Nations system organizations and between them and regional organizations and other stakeholders.

4. Chapter I, in conjunction with annex I, will briefly survey the mandates and main activities of the respective organizations, focusing on their regional activities. Chapter II, which is the heart of the Note, will examine existing mechanisms for coordination and cooperation and ways of strengthening and enhancing them.

5. A point of clarification regarding "notes" issued by JIU may be necessary. Article 11.1 of the JIU statute states: "The Unit may issue reports, notes and confidential letters." Furthermore, article 11.5 states: "Notes and confidential letters shall be submitted to executive heads for use by them as they may decide." The Inspector would urge executive heads to consider forwarding this "note", with their comments as appropriate, for the consideration of their respective legislative bodies.

6. In conducting this study, the Inspector consulted relevant documentation, sent a questionnaire to a number of United Nations system organizations and interviewed officials at different locations and levels of authority. He wishes to thank all the officials who cooperated in the preparation of this note and to record his appreciation for their valuable contributions.

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<sup>2</sup> JIU/REP/96/3; A/51/636.

<sup>3</sup> For more information about JIU reports, see the JIU web site: [www.unsystem.org/jiu](http://www.unsystem.org/jiu).

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<sup>1</sup> JIU/REP/97/1; A/52/457.

## I. UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM REGIONAL PRESENCE IN ARAB COUNTRIES

7. Annex I to this note describes in more detail the United Nations system organizations' regional presence, location and geographical coverage with brief references to intercountry or regional activities.

### A. Presence and location

8. The presence and location of the United Nations system organizations in the region are mainly in the following clusters:

**Beirut, Lebanon:** is the seat of ESCWA and where the regional offices of the ILO and UNESCO (Education) are also located. Beirut also hosts a UNHCR and a UNIDO regional office and the UNDP Subregional Resource Facility for Arab States (SURF-AS);

**Cairo, Egypt:** is the host to several regional offices, including: FAO, ICAO, ITU, UNESCO (Science and Technology), and WHO.<sup>4</sup> It also houses the offices of UNHCR, UNIDO and WFP;

**Amman, Jordan:** is the seat of the UNICEF regional office and that of the UNFPA Country Support Team (CST). It also hosts the offices of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM);

**Manama, Bahrain:** hosts the UNEP regional office.

9. For the funds and programmes, especially UNDP and UNFPA, and in spite of the fact that they have regional presence in the area, the regional or intercountry programmes and projects are managed from their respective headquarters in New York. For the purposes of this review New York will therefore be considered as one of the clusters, although outside the region.

### B. Geographical coverage

10. Annex I also shows the differences in the range of coverage among the different organizations. A number of them cover all Arab

countries while others cover several or a limited number. Other organizations' coverage goes beyond the Arab countries. This may seem to pose certain limitations on cooperation and coordination. However, it is not unusual to have either a few or several Arab countries involved in a subregional or a regional project, or to have non-Arab countries outside "the region" as participants. It is probably more important that such projects should command the support of the countries involved and within the framework of agreed-upon priority areas.

11. One particular question to be flagged is the fact that the Arab countries are covered by two regional commissions; namely, ESCWA in Asia, which covers the Arab countries in West Asia plus Egypt (straddling the two continents of Africa and Asia), and the ECA, whose coverage includes the Arab countries in Africa. But as indicated in chapter II, section B below, both commissions are engaged through the UNDP RCF for Arab States in intercountry projects that either encompass all or some Arab countries.

12. Approaches towards possible harmonization of geographical coverage of the different United Nations organizations present in the region could be a subject for consideration by CEB.

### C. Mandates

13. It is obvious that the organizations identified have different and specific mandates. There are cases where mandates may overlap or, where certain priority areas, such as HIV/AIDS, water management, environment and others, are covered by more than one organization. In such cases, cooperation and coordination require that special attention be given to defining the roles of agencies in different activities. In the JIU report on strengthening field representation mentioned above questions of overlapping of mandates, "mandate creep" and lead agencies were thoroughly discussed and could be extended to the regional level.

### D. Developmental strategic goals and priority areas

14. There are certain development and strategic goals and priority areas that have been identified

<sup>4</sup> UNESCO has a cluster of six offices besides Beirut and Cairo which also serve as regional bureaux; there are also subregional cluster offices in Doha, Qatar and Rabat, Morocco, and national offices in Ramallah, Palestine, and in Amman, Jordan (also covering Iraq).

and enunciated by successive global summits and conferences during the 1990s: the Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) (Cairo, 1994), the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995), the World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (Lisbon, 1998) being notable examples. More recently, the United Nations General Assembly convened a special session on HIV/AIDS (2001) and one on children (2002). The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was held recently, in Johannesburg in September 2002. Above all, the United Nations Millennium Summit and its Declaration, which was approved by 189 countries, including 147 heads of State or Government, in New York in September 2000 (see General Assembly resolution 55/2 of 18 September 2000), identified priority areas and set clear goals.

15. Within the general but converging priority areas and goals of the Millennium Declaration, which cover, inter alia, peace and security, development and poverty eradication, promotion of gender equality, achieving universal primary education, combating HIV/AIDS, reducing child and maternal mortality, ensuring environmental sustainability and human rights and promoting democracy and good governance, the organizations of the United Nations should be able to work together in a more coordinated and harmonized manner. It should be underlined that such goals and priorities were set up by Member States who therefore have first claim to their ownership.

16. Indeed, in reviewing and examining mission statements and priority areas of United Nations system organizations, common references are frequently found to the general objectives, which are honed to fit each of their fields of specialization, and to accommodate the recent restructuring and reform processes that have had a bearing on so many of their activities and programme cycles. Their goals and priorities are usually then further tailored to meet the specific needs of the different regions in which they are represented. A number of officials within the United Nations organizations believe that the Arab region constitutes a homogeneous region and therefore should yield itself to smooth processes of cooperation and coordination.

17. Instances of cooperation and partnerships within the United Nations system organizations and with their counterpart regional organizations are, in effect, numerous across the Arab countries and span most of the common priority areas listed above. The obvious links between the various sectors are reflected in some of the partnerships that have evolved in the region.

18. The Pan Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM), for example, which is executed by LAS, is supported and funded by UNFPA and the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND). Other contributing organizations include ESCWA, UNICEF and WHO from the United Nations system, together with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund, the Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences (IOMS) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). It operates in collaboration with the ministries of health, social affairs, education and information of, to date, 16 participating countries. The Project aims to provide a timely and integrated flow of reliable information suitable for formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating family health and reproductive health policies and programmes in a cost-effective manner.

19. The interdependence between areas such as water and sanitation; food and nutrition; health (especially HIV/AIDS); education; environment, etc., has resulted in close cooperation among the agencies and programmes concerned.

20. In order to strengthen joint collaboration and promote the coordination of regional programmes and projects, as well as to ensure exchange of information and avoid duplication of intervention, FAO took the initiative to establish a number of Inter-Agency Task Forces (IATFs) with other United Nations bodies and regional organizations that are active in the same fields of competence. Areas of cooperation in IATFs include: plant production and protection; animal production and health; food and nutrition; biotechnology applications and environmental and sustainable development. The United Nations system representation in IATFs includes ESCWA, FAO, ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF and WHO.

21. UNFPA has supported ESCWA in the establishment of a population integrated

information system to enable ESCWA to monitor the implementation of global conferences (in this case ICPD and the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW)). Similarly, UNFPA is supporting the LAS Population Research Unit in the development and maintenance of an international migration database.

22. Another approach to regional cooperation can be demonstrated by the support of WHO to regional programmes through “collaborating centres” established in countries throughout the region. These collaborative programmes support such diverse initiatives as environmental protection, control of drinking water, eradication of polio, awareness raising campaigns, workshops, and many more.

23. Besides WHO (Cairo) collaboration with UNICEF (Amman) and ESCWA (Beirut) on joint activities, the WHO Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO/EMRO) Centre for Environmental Health Activities (CEHA) in Amman together with the UNEP Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA) organized the first regional conference dedicated to water demand management, with the participation of 65 experts from 19 countries as well as ESCWA, FAO, UNESCO and six donor agencies. WHO including EMRO is working with the African Union (AU) through the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). The regional office works closely with the LAS in several areas, including child health, genetic counselling, tobacco control, drug strategy, nursing, family health, and others.

24. Series of activities were undertaken by ESCWA in collaboration with UNICEF and other organizations in the area of Research and Statistics as a follow-up to global conferences. This covered, among other things, efforts towards harmonization of indicators, and development of a subregional “Gender and Statistics” project.

25. UNESCO-Beirut has established a collaborative mechanism at the regional level to follow-up and monitor progress towards achieving the “Education for All” goals and commitments (ARABEFA). Other United Nations organizations included in this regional collaborative effort include: ILO, ESCWA, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, as well as the World Bank. Of regional organizations and funds, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD),

AGFUND, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the Islamic Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ISESCO) are involved.

26. Annex I cites examples of current and pipeline regional projects of a number of agencies and partnerships therein.

27. In its *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, the Bureau of Arab States, UNDP, in partnership with AFESD, while recognizing the strides made in the last five decades in fields such as education, health and others, identified basic shortcomings rooted in institutional structures. These shortcomings, which pose serious obstacles to human development, were identified as “the three deficits relating to freedom, empowerment of women, and knowledge”. The “report concludes that Arab countries need to embark on rebuilding their societies on the basis of:

- Full respect for human rights and freedoms as the cornerstone of good governance, leading to human development;
- The complete empowerment of Arab women ...;
- The consolidation of knowledge acquisition and its effective utilisation”.

28. The report suggests basic strategies to offset the three above-mentioned deficits in the fields of education; research and development; health; alleviation and eradication of poverty; empowerment of women; good governance; safeguarding the environment and working towards a knowledge society, including information and communication technologies (ICT) connectivity.

29. The *Arab Human Development Report* adds that to “achieve human development requires not only reforming governance regimes at the national and pan-Arab levels on a solid foundation of freedoms and economic dynamism, but also the strengthening of Arab co-operation in order to maximize the benefits of globalisation and avoid its perils”.

#### **E. Cooperation with regional organizations**

30. LAS, its principal organs and specialized agencies are almost a mirror image of the family of the United Nations system. Moreover there are

regional, as well as national funds and development banks that have been involved in the economic and social development of the region. Most of these, if not all, have been, at one point or another, cooperating with United Nations organizations under different programmes and projects. These partnerships constitute a major feature of cooperative efforts between the United Nations organizations and the Arab countries and regional organizations therein.

31. Cooperation has also taken place with Islamic institutions under the aegis of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) or otherwise, such as with Al-Azhar University and the Islamic Development Bank.

32. It is not the intention of this note to go into a full description of the regional organizations and their cooperation and partnership with the United Nations system organizations but simply to point to the importance of these organizations as partners

in the developmental efforts and in the processes of programming, execution and implementation of intercountry projects. Such partnerships and cooperation existed in the past and should be encouraged and enhanced in different sectors and priority areas fostering links between similar agencies on both sides.

33. It is worth noting that LAS, under its new leadership, is presently going through a process of restructuring and reform. This exercise and its outcome should open new venues for cooperation and partnerships for the benefit of the countries of the region. The *Arab Human Development Report 2002* referred to above, was launched on 2 July 2002 in Cairo by the LAS Secretary General and the Director of the Bureau of Arab States in UNDP.

34. For identification purposes, a list of regional organizations appears as annex II.

## II. TOWARDS MORE COHERENT AND SYSTEMATIC COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

35. In this chapter the main mechanisms of coordination and cooperation are surveyed and assessed. The roles of a number of organizations are identified. Ways of enhancing and strengthening coordination mechanisms will be examined and conclusions will be drawn and recommendations suggested.

### A. The Regional Coordination Group

#### (a) The Legislative background

36. The role of the regional commissions in coordination at the regional level was spelled out in General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 and its annex on the "Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System" which, inter alia, stated:

"The regional commissions should be enabled fully to play their role under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council as the main general economic and social development centres within the United Nations system for their respective regions, having due regard to the responsibilities of the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies in specific sectoral fields and the co-ordinating role of the United Nations Development Programme in respect of technical co-operation activities." (Sect. IV, para. 19.)

"Taking into account the special needs and conditions of their respective regions, they should exercise team leadership and responsibility for co-ordination and co-operation at the regional level. They may convene periodic meetings, as necessary, for the purpose of improving the co-ordination of the relevant economic and social activities of the United Nations system in their respective regions." (Sect. IV, para. 20.)

37. In 1998, within the context of the reform process, the Secretary-General submitted his report on regional cooperation to the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council<sup>5</sup>. Pursuant to that, the Council adopted resolution 1998/46 and

<sup>5</sup> "Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields: Report of the Secretary-General: The regional commissions in the context of a programme for reform of the United Nations" (E/1998/65 of 24 June 1998).

its annexes on "Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields".

38. Both the report and the resolution, in particular Annex III, dealt with a number of topics including:

- The regional commissions as regional outposts of the United Nations: where it pointed to the role of the commissions in fulfilling norm-setting, dissemination and analytical functions as well as undertak[ing] operational activities. It stressed the importance of coordination between the commissions and various United Nations entities at the regional level and called for more consultation between the commissions and UNDP in this regard;

- The regional commissions as part of their respective regional institutional landscape: it "calls for close cooperation between the commissions and other relevant regional bodies in order to reinforce synergies and complementarities between their respective programmes of work" and to "ensure that ... [they concentrate] on specific issues for which a regional coordinated approach is desirable and reflect the mandates and priorities of the regional commissions". It also stated: "The team leadership role of the regional commissions calls for their holding regular inter-agency meetings in each region with a view to improving coordination among the work programmes of the organizations of the United Nations system in that region. In this respect the Economic and Social Council welcomes the efforts by the Secretary-General to improve coordination within the United Nations system, including his proposal of yearly meetings, to be chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General in each geographical area, among the relevant entities of the United Nations system engaged in regional and intercountry activities. These meetings should be cost-effective and built up on already existing coordination mechanisms and should focus on specific issues requiring coordination at the regional level."

#### (b) Experience of the Regional Coordination Group

39. Established and chaired by ESCWA in 1995 in Amman, Jordan, as the Regional Inter-Agency

Coordination Group (RICG), it was comprised of United Nations organization offices to facilitate inter-agency coordination at the regional level. It ran in sequence to coordination meetings at the country level chaired by the Resident Coordinator. In April 1999 RICG was designated as the Regional Coordination Group (RCG) with ESCWA as its secretariat. Since 1995, the Group has met annually with almost all United Nations organizations present in the region participating at different levels of seniority and authority.

40. Discussions concentrated on administrative issues such as common premises and services, and on substantive issues such as establishing task forces for follow-up on cross-cutting issues and global conferences. It also became a forum for information sharing and lessons learned.

41. The RCG meeting of March 1999 in Beirut, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations with remarkable attendance by representatives of other United Nations organizations, deserves special attention. It flagged a number of themes and conclusions that included:

- Assessment of existing mechanisms of regional inter-agency coordination and cooperation;
- Enhancement of mechanisms for improving concerted response of the United Nations system to the real needs of the region;
- The need for a simple, viable and less costly mechanism for coordinating activities of United Nations organizations;
- The importance of formulating a collective regional strategy based on a limited number of critical issues; and
- Identification of regional and intercountry priorities.

42. Subsequent meetings of RCG, in April 1999 and April 2000, requested participants to report on and update joint activities and agreed on creating a web site for RCG and appointing focal points in each United Nations organization.

43. In the April 2001 meeting, further discussion about the web site took place. The meeting identified priority areas with potential coordination and cooperation including: development of integrated social policies in the Arab countries, with ESCWA as a lead agency; environment; gender and poverty (a lead agency to be assigned

for each later). RCG considered the idea of inviting LAS to its next meeting.

44. In the last meeting on 28 June 2002, the Executive Secretary of ESCWA stressed the importance of coordination among United Nations agencies and organizations as well as the need to be practical and action oriented. There was also convergence of views among the participants on a number of issues including the following:

- The need for a regional vision and strategy with a framework of priority areas within which the United Nations organizations would contribute according to their respective fields of specializations;
- The launching and developing of the web site for RCG, which should be a collaborative effort concentrating on joint activities and be linked to other United Nations organizations web sites without overloading it.

45. In conclusion, the Inspector believes that RCG is the main existing mechanism for coordination at the regional level. It is at the developmental stage and needs to be strengthened at different levels.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS 1, 2, 3 and 4**

*(For chapter II, section A above)*

#### **B. The United Nations Development Programme**

46. In terms of regional and intercountry programmes and projects, UNDP has a major lead role to play. Through its RCF for the Arab States, the Bureau of Arab States in UNDP can play a catalyst role. In cooperation with other United Nations organizations, and non-United Nations partners, such as governments, civil society and regional organizations, UNDP and its partners can set the framework for regional cooperation on a cyclical basis.

47. RCF for the Arab States (2002-2005)<sup>6</sup> is based on the Arab countries' commitment to human development as the overall framework for growth and development. Such commitments were in line with, and were confirmed at, the United Nations global summits and conferences of the 1990s and

<sup>6</sup> DP/RCF/RAS/2 of 7 November 2001.

reaffirmed and consolidated in the goals of the Millennium Declaration. The second RCF (2002-2005) was therefore predicated on support to human development and in response to the millennium goals of poverty reduction, through three interrelated strategic support areas: globalization, governance and knowledge.

48. **Globalization** and liberalization risk failing the poor. To address this, UNDP identified a number of priority support areas: building national capacities to enhance coherence and consistency between liberalization and poverty reduction; strengthening national and regional capacity for shaping and engaging in multilateral trade regimes in cooperation with the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO); and promoting small and micro-enterprises.

49. **Governance:** The Secretary-General, in his annual report on the work of the Organization<sup>7</sup> noted that good governance was perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development. The need is to address the most disenfranchised segments of the population that suffer exclusion. UNDP is involved in activities related to governing institutions and systems such as cooperation with the Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) for more efficient operation of parliaments and for improved administration and financing of elections. It cooperates with public administration organizations to transform bureaucracies into active agents of development. It also covers areas dealing with administration of justice, financial transparency and accountability, and human rights and freedom.

50. **Knowledge** is the third area of support that is of a cross-cutting value that pervades the first two areas. It does not only have an intrinsic value in itself but also serves as an instrument of change. UNDP could work with United Nations organizations such as UNESCO, as well as concerned civil society and regional institutions. UNDP is involved in areas of higher education including quality assessment of university programmes and in use of ICT for development. ICT is used as a means to generate, disseminate, share and utilize knowledge and information.

<sup>7</sup> A/53/1.

51. In the management, execution and implementation processes of RCF, UNDP would continue to work with governments, regional institutions and organizations as well as other United Nations organizations in close partnership. A two-tiered advisory structure for RCF was established:

- (a) An Advisory Board for RCF at large comprising prominent development experts and practitioners; and
- (b) Experts and pioneers in individual programme areas to provide a close regional perspective.

52. UNDP has an added advantage, within the context of Arab countries, in that it covers and works with both ESCWA and ECA. ECA, located in Addis Ababa, covers 53 African countries, including ten Arab countries. Although its main activities are geared primarily towards African problems and issues, it shares common priority areas with the other regional commissions. What is relevant for this note is the involvement of ECA as well as certain African regional organizations, such as the AU in the regional programmes and intercountry projects involving Arab countries. That is one reason why UNDP has a pivotal role to play in joint programmes and activities involving Arab countries in Africa and Asia with the involvement of the two commissions.

53. UNDP, through its RCF for Arab States and with reference to the *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, is in a unique position to play a lead role in programming and identification of intercountry projects in close cooperation with other United Nations organizations as well as regional organizations.

## **RECOMMENDATION 5**

(For chapter II, section B above)

### **C. The United Nations Development Group**

54. UNDG was originally comprised of the following funds and programmes: UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP. As it stands now it includes almost all United Nations system organizations.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Membership of the UNDG as at June 2002 was as follows: UNDP (Chair), UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), WHO,



While the Group's main concerns are at the country level through policy and administrative directives to their representatives in the field and especially through the resident coordinator system, it also deals with issues at the regional level. One such example is a letter of 6 September 2001 signed by the four executive heads and addressed to United Nations resident coordinators and country team members. The letter identifies four major issues for follow-up:

- The pivotal role of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a frame of reference for the work of the United Nations system through CCA and UNDAF;
- The identification of the strategic role of the United Nations system and expected results from this assistance;
- The significance of full participation by the government, civil society, and other stakeholders [regional organizations] in CCA and UNDAF;
- The collective responsibility of the country team for the success of CCA and UNDAF.

55. The above could be extended to include policies and directives at the regional level. Thus the UNDG programme group on UNDAF assessment follow-up recommended that the United Nations should be well equipped to network both within and between countries and United Nations organizations should have access to each other's information. It stressed the importance of addressing some development issues on a subregional and regional basis and the proactive role of regional commissions, regional offices of individual organizations and other organizations not part of the United Nations system.

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UNESCO, FAO, UNIDO, ILO, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (United Nations) (DESA), the Department of Public Information (United Nations) (DPI), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNCTAD, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), UNIFEM, the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the regional commissions. Observer status was held by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP), the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (United Nations) (OCHA), the Spokesman for the Secretary-General, the Director of the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General and the World Bank. (Data furnished by the UNDG secretariat.)

56. The rationalization, simplification and harmonization of procedures were emphasized. In addition to simplifying the programme preparation process, there was also general consensus on the need to harmonize operational procedures, particularly in finance, administration and personnel. Decision 2001/11 of 22 June 2001 of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board represents a significant step in this direction. It was hoped that both the UNICEF and WFP Executive Boards would reach a similar decision.

57. The above issues were emphasized and elaborated upon in the meeting of the regional directors of the United Nations Development Group Executive Committee (UNDGEXCOM) of 7 December 2001. The Executive Director of UNFPA, who chaired the meeting, emphasized the importance of the Road Map and the MDGs and the United Nations system's collective responsibility to assist in eradicating poverty, promoting gender equality, achieving universal primary education, combating HIV/AIDS, reducing child and maternal mortality and ensuring environmental sustainability. She underscored the role of regional directors in enhancing inter-agency coordination.

58. Some general conclusions drawn from the discussions included:

- Sharing best practices across regions/agencies;
- Promoting inter-agency regional dialogue, including between agency regional technical teams.

59. UNDG and the meetings of the directors of UNDGEXCOM are an institutionalized forum that should be encouraged and used as a mechanism for fostering and enhancing regional coordination and cooperation in the Arab countries. Their conclusions and recommendations could be channelled through the deliberations of the RCG chaired by ESCWA.

## **RECOMMENDATION 6**

*(For chapter II, section C above)*

#### **D. Other United Nations Agencies**

60. Other United Nations agencies, especially the large ones such as FAO and WHO, have their own regular programmes, regional activities and projects including those under extrabudgetary resources reflecting in part their respective mandates and fields of specialization. This is over and above their partnership with other United Nations organizations, especially with UNDP and acting in their capacities as executing and implementing or cooperating agencies. Moreover funds and programmes such as UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP have their own extensive programmes, both at the country and regional levels.

61. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has a regional programme that supports regional activities, including technical cooperation projects in many Arab countries.

62. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has undertaken a series of activities in the region in the fields of maritime safety and marine pollution prevention. A set of model safety regulations for non-convention-size ships was developed for the Maghreb countries which will be extended to other Arab States during 2002. IMO is considering the possibility of establishing an IMO regional office to facilitate its support to the countries of the region.

63. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is expanding its regional and national programmes in the region and it actively participates in the work of RCG.

64. DPI maintains nine information centres and cooperates with and renders services to both United Nations system organizations and regional organizations.

65. In the area of environment, there is still a need to streamline coordination of the United Nations organization activities in the region with a view to implementing the Arab Initiative for Achieving Sustainable Development. The coordination between the LAS Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), UNEP and ESCWA in the preparation process for WSSD was a major cooperation effort that led to better coordination of the Arab position at the Summit, drawing on the Arab Declaration and the Arab Initiative in that respect. The WSSD Plan of

Action calls for a stronger role for regional commissions and for improving intraregional coordination and cooperation in sustainable development among regional commissions, United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, regional development bodies and other regional and subregional institutes and bodies. The Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR) has a primary role to perform in this field.

66. It is suggested that ESCWA and UNEP/ROWA, within the mechanism of RCG, should analyse the WSSD preparatory processes for lessons learned and act as lead agencies towards coordinating WSSD follow-up at the regional level.

67. The World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund play critical roles in the economic and social development of the countries of the region. Their participation and contribution in the coordination processes of the activities of the United Nations system organizations cannot be overlooked.

68. In its diagnosis of challenges facing the region, the *Arab Human Development Report 2002* points to "two intertwined sets of challenges to peace and to development". "These are the challenges to the pursuit of freedom from fear" and "freedom from want". It further highlights key aspects of both sets of challenges including: wars, refugees, foreign illegal occupation, conflicts, sanctions and embargoes which stifle freedom, development, growth and stability, both at the national and regional levels. In response, the United Nations system organizations continue to be engaged in meeting basic needs as well as humanitarian and emergency situations.

69. The work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the fields of education, health and social services in the host countries of Lebanon, Jordan and Syria and, more prominently, in Palestine, stands out. Humanitarian and emergency responses are not limited to the Palestinian situation, but also include those in Iraq and others in the region. Other United Nations system organizations involved besides UNRWA include: UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO.

70. Moreover, and in response to wars and conflicts, the region witnessed the first United Nations peacekeeping mission, namely: the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). Other subsequent missions included the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), and the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM). All these missions have direct relation to activities of other United Nations organizations in the region, especially in coordination of security-related matters.

**E. Cooperation with regional organizations and institutions**

71. As mentioned earlier, LAS, its principal organs and specialized agencies almost mirror those of the family of the United Nations system. Cooperation between the two has been a permanent feature of joint endeavours and ventures. There is also cooperation with other organizations including Islamic institutions. Mechanisms to enhance coordination and cooperation on a more systematic basis between the two groups should be welcomed.

**RECOMMENDATION 7**

*(For chapter II, section E above)*

**F. Lead role for interagency coordination at the regional level**

72. In the United Nations system, the machinery for inter-agency coordination at the intersectoral level centres on the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), formerly known as the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), under the leadership of the Secretary-General. The JIU report entitled "Review of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its machinery"<sup>9</sup> gives a detailed review of the subject.

73. In the field, there is no machinery corresponding to that of CEB. The resident coordinator system is mainly concerned with coordination at the national level. The question arises as to whether the role played by the Secretary-General, mutatis mutandis, should be extended to the field whereby the Executive Secretary of the regional commission is to play a similar role. It is suggested that the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of CEB, should take up the matter for consideration by CEB and possible follow-up by its machinery.

**RECOMMENDATION 8**

*(For chapter II, section F above)*

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<sup>9</sup> JIU/REP/99/1; A/54/288.

## ANNEX I

## UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM REGIONAL PRESENCE IN ARAB COUNTRIES

CLUSTER 1 - BEIRUT, LEBANONECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA)

*Location:* Beirut, Lebanon

*Established:* 1 January 1974 (then ECWA) as successor to United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut (UNESOB), by GA Resolution 1818(LV) dated 9 August 1973

*Coverage:* Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

**Activities:** As Chair of the Regional Coordination Group (see Chapter II), ESCWA has a particular role to play in the promotion of regional and subregional activities. ESCWA itself has projects covering the whole region in such fields as coordination of social development policies, development of the Arab family, information systems development, gender statistics (with UNDP/UNESCO/UNICEF), household survey project and population policies (with UNFPA). In addition, it has intercountry or subregional activities in Syria and Lebanon (database on Palestinian camps with UNICEF), Syria and Egypt (rural community development and the participation of women), and across Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Kuwait, training and rehabilitation in community development. By definition, ESCWA cooperates with all other United Nations system organizations in the region on projects within each one's mandate. In addition it has links with regional institutions, both for funding and cooperation, such as the League of Arab States, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, AGFUND, and many others.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)

*Location:* ILO Regional Office for Arab States, Beirut, Lebanon.

*Established:* Returned to Beirut in 1995 after 12 years' absence due to security considerations.

*Coverage:* Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, West Bank and Gaza.

**Activities:** ILO Regional Office for Arab States has developed a number of subregional activities funded through its regular budget in such areas as the promotion of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Rights at Work, labour market information systems, the promotion of employment and combating child labour. In addition, it has currently in the pipeline four multi-bilaterally funded projects as follows:

- Establishment and support of businesswomen associations in selected Arab countries (Bahrain, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen);
- Regional programme for combating child labour in the Arab region (all except Yemen and West Bank/Gaza);
- Establishment of an Arab Centre for social development (based in UAE) (whole region).

The Office provides technical and financial assistance to the League of Arab States, the Arab Labour Organization and its subsidiaries—the Regional Arab Programme for Labour Administration and the Institute on Occupational Safety and Health. The ILO also cooperates in a number of technical areas with the Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs for GCC States.

## **UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)**

*Location:* UNESCO Regional Office for Education in the Arab States (UNEDBAS), Beirut, Lebanon.

*Established:* Originally in 1961 as The Arab Centre for Administration and Training of Education Personnel (ASCATEP) as a result of Resolution 1233 of the UNESCO General Conference. Became UNDEBAS in 1972, relocated to Beirut via Cairo/Paris/Amman in 1996 and is now the Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States.

*Coverage:* All Arab States

**Activities:** UNDEBAS currently has four on-going or approved intercountry projects, as follows:

- Educational Decision Support System (hosted by Lebanon and covers 20 Arab countries, except Somalia). Project jointly funded by UNICEF, AGFUND, AFESD, ISESCO and the World Bank;
- Regional project on School Health (hosted by Lebanon, participating countries: Yemen, Lebanon, Oman, Egypt, Sudan, Syria). Project jointly funded with UNAIDS;
- Governance and poverty reduction (hosted by Lebanon and Morocco, participating countries: Yemen and Egypt);
- Quality assessment in Arab Universities (hosted in New York, most Arab countries participating). Project funded by UNDP/New York.

UNDEBAS maintains close relations with other members of the United Nations system in the region, in particular, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, UNRWA and ESCWA, as well as other regional institutions.

## **UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (UNIDO)**

*Locations:* UNIDO Subregional Office, Beirut, Lebanon (also in Cairo, Egypt: see below).

*Established:* March 2000 (upgraded from a country office in Beirut, Lebanon).

*Coverage:* Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and technical assistance to other Arab countries as requested.

**Activities:** In coordination with the Arab Regional Bureau at Headquarters, the Regional Office provides support to some of these activities (pipeline, ongoing and completed);

- UNIDO/ESCWA Cooperative Programmes: Regional Service Framework which includes areas of cooperation in the field of support to SMEs, Industrial Clusters, Investment Promotion, Market Access Facilitation, Environment and Accreditation System;
- UNIDO/Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting Cooperative Programme (GOIC). The activities with GOIC are presently focusing on the Establishment of a Network of Industrial Subcontracting and Partnership Exchanges (SPXs) in GOIC member states;
- Global Forum on Management of Technology with Focus on the Arab Region (cooperation and awareness-raising) held in Vienna in May 2001.

UNIDO also has offices in Sudan and Tunisia. It has Investment Promotion Units (IPUs) in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

## **UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)**

*Location:* Subregional Resource Facility for Arab States (SURF-AS), Beirut, Lebanon.

*Established:* October 1998 as part of UNDP's decentralization of substantive support to the regional level.

*Coverage:* UNDP has 17 offices in the Arab States region (North Africa and Middle East): Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen; plus the Programme of Assistance to the Palestine People (PAPP), and Comoros and Mauritania, which are organizationally covered by the Regional Bureau for Africa. It also covers activities in Oman and Qatar.

**Activities:** The major role of the SURF-AS is to provide back-up to UNDP Country Offices to promote human development, and this includes networking, information sharing and exchange, as well as the

dissemination of comparative experiences and best practices of both UNDP and its partners across the region.

## **CLUSTER 2 - CAIRO, EGYPT**

### **FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)**

*Location:* FAO Regional Office for the Near East (RNE), Cairo, Egypt.  
FAO Subregional Office for North Africa (SNEA), Tunis, Tunisia.

*Established:* RNE (1947); SNEA (1996).

*Coverage:* *Arab Members:* Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

*Non-Arab Members:* Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Malta, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan.

**Activities:** FAO's main priorities for the region are broadly as follows: policy advice in all matters pertaining to agricultural development and intra-regional trade (including fisheries and forestry), food security at both national and household levels, natural resources management and combating desertification, improving nutrition, relief/emergency assistance and preparedness strategies, support to regional cooperation against plant pests and animal diseases (e.g. desert locusts, rinderpest), capacity building on WTO matters, implementation of international conventions and codes of conduct (pesticides, genetic resources, plant protection, conservation and sound management of fisheries, etc.), agro-business development, improved farm management systems, sharing and use of information. Within this framework, examples of current regional projects include:

- Harmonization of national standards in water management (Algeria, Tunisia, Libya);
- Training of staff after relocation of the Centre for Marketing Information and Advisory Services for Fishery Products in the Arab Region (INFOSAMAK: eight participating countries) from Bahrain to Morocco; previous INFOSAMAK phases were funded by UNDP and AFESD;
- Population Specialist in Amman (with support from UNFPA);
- Regional animal disease surveillance and control unit in North Africa, Middle East and Arab Peninsula (in cooperation with IFAD).

### **INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)**

*Location:* ILO Cairo Office, incorporating North African Multidisciplinary Team (NAMAT) Cairo, Egypt.

*Established:* 1959 (NAMAT established in 1993).

*Coverage:* Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia.

**Activities:** NAMAT provides technical assistance and advisory services in the fields of employment, labour relations, SME development, human resources development and training, social security and working conditions. It works mainly at the country-level, producing Country Objectives which later become Plans of Action, in close consultation with the tripartite constituents in each country.

### **INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO)**

*Location:* ICAO Middle East Regional Office (MID), Cairo, Egypt.

*Established:* 1953, based on agreement signed with Egyptian government.

*Coverage:* *Arab Members:* Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

*Non-Arab Members:* Afghanistan, Cyprus, Iran, Israel, Pakistan.

**Activities:** ICAO assists in:

- Developing regional air navigation plan for integration into global one;
- Air navigation technologies and systems;
- National and regional aviation safety and security programmes

- Conducting workshops, seminars and other aviation Human Resources Development;
  - Aviation-related Technical Cooperation projects.
- ICAO also cooperates with the League of Arab States and the Arab Civil Aviation Commission, and with ESCWA and WMO. It attended most of the RCG meetings.

### **INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)**

*Location:* ITU Arab Regional Office, Cairo, Egypt.

*Coverage:* Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, Yemen.

**Activities:** ITU's Arab Regional Office carries out projects at the national level only. Its largest regional activity is the organization of seminars, workshops and meetings, a total of 15 on a broad range of subjects having been organized in 2001. ITU cooperates with other regional organizations, in particular the Council of Arab Telecommunications Ministers and the Arab Permanent Telecommunication Committee of the League of Arab States by attending and contributing to their meetings and coordinating common activities. Other United Nations system organizations with which ITU collaborates are ESCWA and WHO.

### **UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)**

*Location:* UNESCO Cairo Office - Regional Office for Science and Technology for the Arab States, Egypt.

*Established:* 1947 as the Middle East Science Corporation Office (MESCO) based on decision of the General Conference in 1946. (Renamed UNESCO Cairo Office in 1994 having previously been known as ROSTAS).

*Coverage:* Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, Yemen. In addition, Djibouti, Somalia and Mauritania can participate in Arab Regional activities.

**Activities:** UNESCO Cairo Office currently has 13 extrabudgetary projects: four regional; one subregional; and eight at the national level.

Regional projects include:

- Upgrading Science and Engineering Education in Arab Universities in cooperation with AFESD, AGFUND, ALESCO and OPEC fund;
- Computer Literacy For All: the International Driving Licence in cooperation with AFESD and UNDP;
- Science and Technology Management and Regional Network in cooperation with AFESD, ALESCO, ISESCO and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences.

The subregional project in the Nile Basin includes Egypt and Sudan as well as four non-Arab African countries.

### **UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (UNIDO)**

*Locations:* UNIDO Regional Office, Cairo, Egypt (also in Beirut, Lebanon: see above).

*Established:* October 1999.

*Coverage:* Egypt, as well as technical assistance to countries in the region, upon their request.

**Activities:** In coordination with the Arab Regional Bureau at Headquarters, the regional office currently provides support to some activities in the following projects:

- UNIDO/AIDMO: A Regional Service Framework (RSF) is being developed in areas of Capacity building, SMEs and Private Sector and Invest Promotion;
- UNIDO/UNDP Cooperation Programme: to support the SMEs sector and related organizations in the region through Networking and Investment Promotion;

- UNIDO/LAS: Secretariat and member states. Programmes of cooperation have been identified in various sectors such as Information Networking, Environment and Capacity building;
- Global forum on Management of Technology: with Focus on the Arab Region, held in Cairo in November 1999, and in Vienna in May 2000.

### **WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)**

*Location:* Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO), Cairo, Egypt.

*Established:* 1948.

*Coverage:* *Arab Members:* Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, Yemen.

*Non-Arab Members:* Afghanistan, Cyprus, Iran, Pakistan.

**Activities:** WHO/EMRO operates through a collaborative programme involving projects on a full range of WHO activities, with collaborating centres established in countries throughout the region, either individually or on an intra-regional basis.

### **WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)**

*Location:* Regional Bureau for the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Central Asia, in Cairo, Egypt.

*Established:* 1998 as part of WFP's decentralization policy to enhance support to country offices.

*Coverage:* *Arab Members:* Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Yemen, Jordan, Palestinian Territories, Iraq and Syria.

*Non-Arab Members:* Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan.

**Activities:** WFP is currently providing food aid to countries in the region under three categories of assistance:

- *Emergencies:* for victims of civil war (Afghanistan), civil strife (Palestinian Territories) and natural disasters (Tajikistan and Afghanistan);
- *Protracted relief and rehabilitation:* mainly for refugees who are unable to return to their homes, such as Western Sahara refugees in Algeria, Afghani refugees in Iran and Pakistan, and Somali refugees in Yemen;
- *Development:* WFP uses food aid as a catalyst for development within the context of national development schemes. Examples include: girls education in Morocco, Yemen and Pakistan; mother and child health in Yemen; rural/agricultural development in Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Palestinian Territories; rural women empowerment in Yemen and Pakistan; institutional feeding of vulnerable groups in Iraq and Palestinian territories.

WFP also has been entrusted by the United Nations to monitor the food component of the "Oil-for-Food" programme in Iraq. The main objective of this monitoring function is ensuring that Iraqis are receiving their food entitlement as per prescribed rations and on a timely basis.

## **CLUSTER 3 - AMMAN, JORDAN**

### **UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)**

*Location:* Country Technical Services Team for Arab States (CST/Amman), Amman, Jordan.

*Established:* 1992

*Coverage:* Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Qatar, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Yemen.

**Activities:** The main function of the CST, established by UNFPA in close collaboration with partner United Nations agencies, is to provide technical advisory services as support to country programmes, rather than actual implementation. It also supports regional and country population programme strategy



development. To achieve this it identifies and mobilizes national and regional technical resources, participates in training at country and regional/subregional levels and promotes information sharing.

### **UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)**

*Location:* Regional Office for Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Amman, Jordan.

*Established:* in 1948 UNICEF launched programmes in Palestine; in 1984 the Regional Office moved from Beirut to Amman.

*Coverage:* MENARO covers 18 Arab States, plus the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Iran.

**Activities:** UNICEF has currently seven regional or subregional projects on-going or in the pipe-line, as follows:

- Mediterranean initiative for child rights (MEDIN) (participating countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and West Bank and Gaza);
- ChildInfo MENA regional database (Algeria, Gulf Countries, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen);
- Multiple indicator cluster survey (Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan, Syria and Palestinians in Syria, Tunisia and Yemen);
- Inter-country network on youth (Jordan, West Bank and Gaza, Syria and Lebanon);
- Subregional contingency plan for Iraq, (Turkey), Jordan, Syria and (Iran);
- Programme for Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the West Bank and Gaza.

### **UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (UNIFEM)**

*Location:* Arab States Regional Office (ASRO), Amman, Jordan.

*Established:* 1994.

*Coverage:* Arab States Regional Office's mandate encompasses 13 Arab countries: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

**Activities:** UNIFEM's work in the region includes about 11 on-going country projects and ten on-going regional programmes focusing on issues ranging from a regional Women's Human Rights programme to capacity-building programmes in the ICT sector. Partners include national governments, independent organizations such as the AGFUND and CISCO Foundation, and the private sector, notably CISCO Systems, Inc.

### **WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)**

*Location:* Regional Centre for Environmental Health Activities (CEHA), Amman, Jordan.

*Established:* Established by WHO/EMRO in 1985 using AGFUND grant and hosted by Jordan.

*Coverage:* WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region.

**Activities:** CEHA serves as the technical arm and information exchange unit of the WHO Supportive Environment for Health Programme for the Eastern Mediterranean Region. This programme also encompasses the Health Promotion and Protection Division in EMRO, in Alexandria. CEHA's main United Nations system collaborators are UNEP, ESCWA and UNRWA. It has links also with other regional institutions: AGFUND, International Development Research Centre, Islamic Development Bank, Centre for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) and the World Bank.

## **CLUSTER 4 – MANAMA – BAHRAIN**

### **UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)**

*Location:* Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA), Manama, Bahrain.

*Established:* 1975 in Beirut and moved to Manama in 1978.

*Coverage:* 12 Arab countries in Asia.

**Activities:** UNEP/ROWA has strong links with regional organizations, in particular LAS and the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) which has led to the Arab League Liaison Office (ALLO) being established in Cairo. An MoU was signed in 1998 between UNEP, CAMRE, the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) and the Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment (ROPME). ROWA aims to enhance the harmonization of environmental action through subregional partnerships to ensure that regional programmes of work are built on synergies and avoid duplication. A joint Secretariat of CAMRE, ESCWA and UNEP has been developed for Rio+10 through the Joint Committee of Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR). ROWA focuses on strengthening intergovernmental policy dialogue through ministerial forums, enhanced information exchange and increased regional and subregional cooperation. (List of activities available.)

## **CLUSTER 5 - NEW YORK**

### **UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)**

*Location:* Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS), UNDP Headquarters, New York.

*Established:* 1970, as Bureau for Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

*Coverage:* UNDP cooperation covers 20 Arab countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen; plus the Programme of Assistance to the Palestine People (PAPP), and Comoros and Mauritania, which are organizationally covered by the Regional Bureau for Africa.

**Activities:** In the context of its second Regional Country Framework (RCF), UNDP aims to take a multinational approach with a view to providing regional public goods, securing positive “intercountry spill-over” and learning, harnessing common interests and capitalizing on the economies of scale inherent in concerted efforts to address shared problems. Through a mix of management and execution modalities in partnership with other United Nations organizations and regional institutions, UNDP seeks to optimize the use of regional resources, enhance efficiency and increase accountability. Regional institutions are preferred as programme hosts. At the end of 2001, UNDP/RABS had twenty ongoing regional or intercountry projects, with another two in the pipeline, most of which were being executed or implemented through UNOPS and which involved partnership with other organizations such as ESCWA, UN/DESA, UNCTAD/ITC, UNIDO, WIPO, OHCHR and the League of Arab States. These projects span a broad number of development areas.

### **UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)**

*Location:* Division for Arab States and Europe, UNFPA, New York.

*Coverage:* Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Qatar, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Yemen. In addition, the Division covers Eastern European and Central Asian countries.

**Activities:** The Division contributes to the formulation of organizational policies; provides support to UNFPA country offices in the development of country programmes and their submission to the Executive Board for approval; and country office management support. It identifies regional strategies and manages a regional programme currently composed of 16 projects covering reproductive health and population and development strategies, advocacy, research and capacity-building activities in partnership with the United Nations and other partners, including the League of Arab States, AGFUND, ISESCO, Al Azhar University, American University of Beirut, The Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides Federation. The Division oversees the technical support services provided by the UNFPA/CST to countries in the region. In addition, it undertakes resource mobilization and advocacy activities in support of country and regional

programmes. It oversees the development of human resources in UNFPA country offices and promotes knowledge-sharing among staff in country offices.

### **UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)**

*Location:* Middle East and North Africa Desk (MENA).

*Established:* UNICEF, December 1946 - first sent assistance to Middle East in late 1940s.

*Coverage:* Arab States and Iran.

**Activities:** Coordination of MENA activities through Regional Office in Amman, Jordan.

### **UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (UNIFEM)**

*Location:* Asia-Pacific and Arab States Section, UNIFEM, New York.

*Coverage:* Arab States.

**Activities:** UNIFEM Arab States' Regional Office projects and initiative focus on:

- *Economic empowerment* that attempts to strengthen women's economic capacity as entrepreneurs and producers, particularly in the context of the new trade agenda and the emergence of new technologies;
- *Governance* and strengthening the institutional capacities of women's organizations and engendering policy-making structures as well as promoting women's participation in the decision-making process;
- *Promotion of Women's Human Rights* and the elimination of all forms of violence against women.

## ANNEX II

## LIST OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

**I. League of Arab States – Specialized Ministerial Councils**

The Council of Arab Information Ministers  
 The Council of Arab Interior Ministers  
 The Council of Arab Justice Ministers  
 The Council of Arab Housing Ministers  
 The Council of Arab Transport Ministers  
 The Council of Arab Social Affairs Ministers  
 The Council of Arab Youth and Sports Ministers  
 The Council of Arab Health Ministers  
 The Council of Arab Environmental Affairs Ministers  
 The Council of Arab Telecom Ministers

**II. League of Arab States – Specialized Agencies**

AAID Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development  
 AADO Arab Administrative Development Organization  
 AAEB Arab Atomic Energy Board  
 AAST Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport  
 AEUC Arab Economic Unity Council  
 AIDMO Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization  
 ALECSO Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization  
 ALO Arab Labour Organization  
 AOAD Arab Organization for Agricultural Development

**III. Development Funds**

ABEDA Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa  
 AFESD Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development  
 AGFUND Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations  
 AMF Arab Monetary Fund  
 Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development  
 Abu Dhabi Fund for Development  
 Saudi Development Fund  
 OPEC Development Fund

**IV. Islamic Organizations**

ICB Islamic Development Bank  
 IOMS Islamic Organization of Medical Sciences  
 ISESCO Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization  
 OIC Organization of the Islamic Conference

**V. Other Regional Organizations**

ABAID Arab Board for Agricultural Investments and Development  
 ABEGS Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States  
 ABSU Arab Broadcasting Stations Union  
 ACSAD Arab Center for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands  
 AEIG Arab Establishment for Investment Guarantees

API	Arab Planning Institute
ARABSAT	Arab Satellite Communications Organisation
ASER	Arab Society for Economic Research
ASPP	Arab Society for Plant Protection
ASTA	Arab Science and Technology Academy
ATF	Arab Thought Forum
AUDI	Arab Urban Development Institute
CAWTAR	Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research
CEDARE	Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
OAPPC	Organisation of Arab Petroleum-Producing Countries