**ESCWA Discusses Cyber Legislation**

In collaboration with the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), ESCWA organized a workshop on cyber legislation in the Arab region on 15-18 October 2012 in UAEU campus, Al Ain. The workshop addressed the vital need for regionally harmonized cyber legislation in order to build trust and confidence in cyber space, combat cybercrime and build a regional knowledge society.

As part of the workshop Chief of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Applications section in ESCWA Nibal Idlebi and Information Technology Officer Matthew Perkins presented research on legal issues pertaining to the development of this sector. Idlebi’s presentation focused on the ESCWA Project “Regional harmonization of cyber legislation to promote knowledge society in the Arab region” and its outcomes. Perkins focused for his part on global trends in child online protection and implications for the Arab region.

ESCWA experts were joined by Head of the Information Technology (IT) Unit at the Lebanese Ministry of Justice, Wassim Hajjar, who provided tangible examples of the legal needs for reform on this topic, and presented how the ESCWA cyber legislation directives address the current legal needs of cyber space. These directives

**Improving Disability Statistics for Better Policymaking**

At the request of the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities (HCAPD) in Jordan, ESCWA conducted a technical visit to the Council on 15-17 October 2012 to develop a comprehensive information system on disability statistics. The Commission’s delegation consisted of ESCWA Chief Social Policy Section Gisela Nauk, Head Statistical Policies and Coordination Unit Neda Jafar, and Research Assistant at the Social Policy Section Rasha Salman.

Over three days, the delegation held meetings with parties concerned with disability issues in the country, taking stock of all impediments to building accurate disability databases and establishing a plan of action on data sources and collection through modern scientific methods. This was done in view of the importance of accurate data for statistical indicators in policy-building and the provision of quality service, which enables Jordan and countries of the region to establish accurate

**Electronic Governance, In Theory and In Practice**

ESCWA participated via videoconference in the 6th international Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance (ICEGOV2012), which took place in Albany, New York from 22 until 25 October 2012. Associate Social Affairs Officer at the ESCWA Centre for Women (ECW) Sukaina Al Nasrawi represented ESCWA in the conference, which was hosted by the Center for Technology in Government at the University at Albany, New York, under the patronage of the United States
ELECTRONIC GOVERNANCE, IN THEORY AND IN PRACTICE (Cont.)

National Archives and Records Administration. The conference was co-organized by the Electronic Governance Center and the United Nations University-International Institute for Software Technology (UNU-IIST). Its main focus was on the role of openness in fostering transparency, participation, accountability and smarter government.

Al Nasrawi contributed to the plenary session entitled “Women and ICTs: Access and Empowerment”, focusing on the status and impact of women and girls’ access to ICT in the Arab region. She shed light on the international, regional and national projects and initiatives being exerted to increase the number of women in science and technology and to encourage girls to major in computer science and engineering to increase women participation in the ICT sector and inclusion in the information society.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS:

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

On 17 December 1999, the United Nations General Assembly designated 25 November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women by Resolution 54/134, and invited governments, international organizations and Non Governmental Organization (NGOs) to organize activities designed to raise public awareness of the problem on that day. Women’s activists have marked 25 November as a day against violence since 1981. This date came from the brutal assassination in 1960 of the three Mirabal sisters, political activists in the Dominican Republic.


IMPROVING DISABILITY STATISTICS FOR BETTER POLICYMAKING (Cont.)

disability statistics harmonious with international estimates.

HCAPD Secretary-General Amal Nahas stressed the need for accurate statistics in general and comprehensive public policy-building. In her meeting with the ESCWA delegation, Nahas said identifying accurate statistics requires honing the skills of cadres working in statistics, pinpointing data collection sources, and limiting the services offered while assessing their quality and efficiency of delivery by service providers. She noted the importance of linking statistical data with the national strategy, and the crucial support ESCWA could provide in connecting HCAPD’s needs in the area of disability with the data of the Department of Statistics (DOS).

Conferees underlined major issues, which include HCAPD and DOS’s participation in future training sessions to build the capacities of people working in disability-related data; the presence of an awareness strategy and a plan of action for service providers to establish and submit reports; the establishment of a work plan for future surveys, namely the 2014 population and housing census, which includes drafting questionnaires and agreeing on a specific definition for disability and its classifications.

CYBER LEGISLATION DISCUSSED AT ESCWA (Cont.)

cover the following aspects: e-communication and freedom of expression; e-transactions and e-signature; e-commerce and consumer protection; personal data protection; cyber crime; and intellectual property rights in cyber space.

The event was attended by local lawyers, as well as faculty professors and students of the UAEU’s law college and members of the press. In addition to the educational and awareness raising impact of the seminar, ESCWA staff members discussed areas for potential collaboration with the dean of the UAEU justice college.

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