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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

## **REPORT**

### **EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON PARTICIPATORY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAMA, 12-14 OCTOBER 2009**

#### **Summary**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) derives its interest in participatory Community development from international and regional resolutions and treaties, including resolution (475) adopted at the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the Arab Council of Ministers of Social Affairs (2004). ESCWA defined a work programme with a set of references, technical material, training activities, meetings, roundtables, technical support and consultancy services as well as field projects that enhance participation between Governments and civil society organizations in public policy processes, including the semi-regional project on the “enhancement of participatory human development in post-conflict countries in western Asia” funded by the United Nations Development Fund. The current meeting is included within the activities of the project.

The Expert Group Meeting on Participatory Community Development, in cooperation with the League of Arab States and the Ministry of Social Development in Bahrain, was held from 12 to 14 October 2009 in the Gulf Hotel in Manama-Bahrain. The meeting aimed at enhancing the capacities of member countries to design and implement cross-cutting social development projects, as well as at evaluating ESCWA approach on participatory development, including the acquired knowledge and skills, operating and managing methods of the development process, and the mechanisms adopted to engage in this process. Fulfilling these objectives mainly depends on the findings and results of discussions and proposals of participants vis-à-vis the meeting thematic areas, which encompass the Local Community Development (LCD) concepts, its new streams and directions in the region, in addition to the LCD projects and programmes based on a manual streamlining the development process, as well as a manual directing participatory research processes, and to the individual and institutional capacity-building strategy.

Participants in the meeting included experts and specialists from Governments, civil society organizations, regional and international organizations, media practitioners, academics and ESCWA staff members.

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## **Introduction**

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in cooperation with the League of Arab States and the Ministry of Social Development in Bahrain, held an expert group meeting to discuss participatory community development. The meeting was held in the Gulf hotel in Manama, Bahrain, from 12 to 14 October 2009. This meeting is the first in a series of activities implemented by ESCWA in support of a project funded by the United Nations Fund for Development on “enhancing participatory human development in post-conflict countries in Western Asia”.
2. This meeting draws from the report of the Executive Secretary on ESCWA activities in its twenty first session which called under item 6-para (e) for greater utilization of the experience gained in local community development; the need to coordinate efforts to take advantage of the related results on a wide scale; and efforts to establish a comprehensive approach to programme and project execution on the national level. The meeting also comes in support to resolution (475) adopted at the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the Arab Council of Ministers of Social Affairs (2004), which entrusted the social development and policy department within the League of Arab States (LAS) with the task of coordinating community development projects with ESCWA and working jointly to implement similar projects in member countries.
3. ESCWA and LAS seek to enhance the capacities of member countries in order to establish and implement joint plans, programmes and projects in social development sectors. They have also been working through their economic and social programmes, to enhance community development for more than ten years. This interest stems from the severity of social problems in local communities due to weak institutional capacities, as well as to efforts exerted by most countries in the region to implement administrative and developmental decentralization, regardless of the adopted implementation patterns and mechanisms.
4. ESCWA worked on investing its expertise and results of its field work in consolidating and developing documentation related to community development, an approach implemented by ESCWA according to an integrated pattern to carry out local community development projects and programmes. This pattern includes a set of crosscutting phases namely: getting to know the community and defining problems in its development, possibilities of improvement, defining the development plan which comprises priorities, alternatives, projects, tasks, timeline, implementation of the plan, choosing alternatives and organizational and technical roles, mobilizing possibilities, capacities and resources, following-up to the implementation of the plan, and evaluation of its performance and achieved targets.
5. Based on the importance of individual and institutional capacities, and the extent to which the approach of community development is based on participation, ESCWA prepared evidence and training programmes to build capacities, develop knowledge and skills and enhance positive orientations of workers, trainers and researchers in community development. Evidence aimed to empower the local community institutions and individuals in order for them to participate in the process of development and coordinate its efficiency on national, regional and international levels. Evidence and programmes overcome obstacles faced by Governments, civil society organizations, and international organizations active in the field of community development. Such obstacles include the lack of knowledge of the concept of community development and the bases for planning its approaches, lack of comprehensive Arab documentation, rarity of competent individuals capable of managing participatory development programmes and projects and weakness of working networks and coordination mechanisms.

### **I. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING**

6. Recommendations of participants were based on the following points:
  - (a) To highlight the resolutions of the Council of Arab Ministers for Social Affairs and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), on the activation of community development programmes and developing related evidence;

(b) To call upon the League of Arab States and ESCWA to enhance partnerships and cooperation in implementing community development programmes, projects and evidence in Arab countries;

(c) To call upon the League of Arab States and ESCWA to carry on the implementation of community development programmes and evidence in Arab countries according to their need to define the orientations of community development;

(d) To provide necessary funds for community development programmes as a necessary condition to implement those programmes and motivate the participation of the private sector in finding necessary funding resources;

(e) To incite member countries to provide support to community development programmes and approaches, and to reaffirm the necessity to develop institutional capacities as well as the capacities of workers in the fields and programmes of community development, on sustainable bases;

(f) To reaffirm the principle of partnership in planning and implementing community development programmes and projects, and to call upon member countries to consolidate and enhance partnerships with civil society organizations, authorities of the local community and the private sector;

(g) To call upon member countries to integrate community development programmes into public policies; to reaffirm the importance of the specific nature of community development programmes being a reflection of the local community needs and potentials and to work on issuing appropriate legislations and laws to support community development programmes and projects, in such a way to ensure its achievement as an actual citizen right;

(h) to incite member countries and partners in the development process to consolidate administrative and developmental decentralization mechanisms and systems, in order to push forward the implementation of community development programmes and projects and ensure its sustainability;

(i) To activate decentralization institutions, systems and standards adopted in member countries while reaffirming the expanding role of municipalities and community governing administrations as well as other institutions operating locally in the field of decision making;

(j) To call upon LAS and ESCWA to set appropriate programmes to activate the partnership with civil society organizations and work to build their capacities and improve their technical capacities, in a way to enhance their role in achieving development;

(k) To reaffirm the importance of disseminating knowledge to all, and focus on consolidating curricula, expanding opportunities to make them available for all social partners, enhancing knowledge networks as appropriate mechanisms to formulate the outcome of achieved developmental experiences, exchanging experiences and promoting most important results;

(l) To call upon all member countries to develop scientific research in fields of community development, and to enhance partnerships with academic institutions to integrate community development programmes in scientific curricula and all developmental specializations;

(m) To adopt necessary mechanisms for including the media in the developmental process in order to motivate and disseminate awareness among the public opinion and arouse the interest in development issues as a public social affair;

(n) To resort to the Manual for local community development and the Manual for participatory research in local community development in ESCWA member countries, in formulating training programmes, and implementing workshops and roundtables in order to enhance participation between Governments, civil society organizations and the private sector to plan development processes and implement related programmes and projects.

## II. PURPOSES AND THEMES OF THE MEETING

7. The expert group meeting aimed at discussing participatory community development through the review of reports on ESCWA approach in community development, the Manual for local community development, the Manual for participatory research in local community development in ESCWA member countries, and the strategy to build and enhance individual and institutional capacities. Participants presented the outcome of international, regional and national experiences in community development, as well as proposals to enhance capacity-building programmes and participation in development according to the following themes:

### A. ESCWA APPROACH IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS AND PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

8. Participants focused on the methodological context of ESCWA community development programmes and projects as well as the feasibility of implementation. They presented the results of the evaluation of individual and institutional capacities in managing development programmes and projects, reaffirming the necessity to intensify training to facilitate working in governmental and non-governmental institutions. The presentation covered procedures for implementing ESCWA programmes while highlighting main achievements and proposed fields to enhance those programmes. It reviewed the efficiency of ESCWA approach and capacity-building programmes as a basis for participatory development, in addition to proposals and mechanisms aimed to develop those programmes, make better use of them and attract support to promote them.

### B. MANUAL FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

9. The manual reflects the interest ESCWA takes in enhancing the capacities of member countries in setting and implementing plans, programmes and projects shared by the different sectors concerned with social development. It highlights as well the interest the Commission has had in community development for over ten years now, which is reflected in its social and economic programmes. Such interest stems from the severity of social problems in local communities and the repercussions on slow economic development indicators, the imbalance and lack of integration between fields of development, in particular social and economic development fields, weak public administration systems and participation mechanisms, lack of investments, growing aspects of inequality, spread of poverty, increasing unemployment and social marginalization, in addition to issues related to education, knowledge, health care, weak social security networks, as well as environment, gender, youth, persons with disabilities and the eldest. ESCWA takes interest in community development in view of the efforts exerted by most countries in the region to implement administrative and developmental decentralization, irrespective of adopted patterns and mechanisms of implementation.

10. Therefore, ESCWA sought to consolidate its experience in dealing with community development issues, and implementing a comprehensive approach for developmental intervention based on the circumstances of the local community and their integration with national development process. Based on the importance of individual and institutional capacities, and the extent to which local community development is dependent on participation, ESCWA prepared this manual and the necessary training programmes particularly for capacity-building, developing knowledge and skills and enhancing positive orientations for workers in the field of local community development, in order to empower local community institutions, groups and individuals to participate in development, and coordinate its performance on national, regional and international levels. This manual, as well as the related programmes aim to overcome obstacles faced by Governments, civil society organizations and international organizations working in the field of local community development, namely: lack of knowledge in the concept of community development and the bases of its approaches, lack of comprehensive documentation in Arabic, lack of trained staff with competencies to manage participatory development programmes and projects and weak working networks and coordination mechanisms.

11. ESCWA deemed appropriate to issue this revised version of the manual in separate parts to facilitate its future update in view of the implementation and the opinions of beneficiaries. The first part of the guide constitutes the general frame of local community development; the second deals with means to identify local community problems and capacities; the third highlights the approach of managing developmental programmes and projects and the tools needed to support them; the fourth focuses on means of communication, motivation of local community and the developmental role of the media; the fifth covers the participation of the people, the organization of development and the ways to finance it; and the sixth deals with the follow-up and evaluation of the development of local community.

12. Discussions focused on the following points:

(a) Positive feedback as to the reliance of the manual on open trends that facilitate dialogue and motivate participation in designing and implementing plans, programmes and projects. The avoidance of pre-existing formulas and previous patterns led to the conformity of the manual orientations with the circumstances of most Arab countries, and therefore enhanced the credibility of the manual as a solid basis to devise developmental policies;

(b) Consideration of the manual as an adequate reference to develop the role of social actors and enhance their capacities in community development based on participation;

(c) Clarity of the language and fluency of the style used in the manual stress the necessity to accelerate its issuance and the implementation of the resulting technical material, in view of the need to disseminate knowledge and follow-up training activities. Major challenges may face the translation of the manual developmental trend into public policies in the region. Moreover, possible discrepancies may result from the fact that those trends are based on the democratic and modernization dimensions contradicting with local infrastructure and traditional civil aspect.

#### C. MANUAL FOR PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH IN LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN ESCWA MEMBER COUNTRIES

13. The manual aims at elucidating a knowledge base that assists the authority and decision makers to choose appropriate plans for development, in view of the comparison between the advantages and disadvantages of various plans, programmes and projects. The knowledge base was identified as an essential pillar to define problems and capacities in the field of development on the ground, in view of its ample information and reliable data. In fact, field implementation of community development programmes and projects has revealed that the phase of identification of the reality of the community is a crucial one as it impacts the planning of development programmes and projects as well as the achievement of their targets. This phase aims to understand the relationships which govern different social, economic and cultural aspects of development, their evolution, and organization within the targeted community considered to be the interactive framework of the developmental programmes and projects. Participants discussed as well the participatory research approach and the extent to which it provides empowering circumstances in the management of development based on the understanding of the reality and problems of the communities, and in view of setting and implementing appropriate programmes and projects to improve this reality. Such method is based on the theory that a creative approach of participatory research contributes to defining comprehensive conceptions of the different paths of development based on the reality of the community. It contributes as well in empowering active actors to take decisions based on real information and data, and clear knowledge of available opportunities, in addition to arousing interest and mobilization to participate in the process of development.

14. Discussions covered the following points:

(a) Necessity to promote the content of the manual for participatory research and implementation of the resulting technical material, as they are necessary to individual and institutional capacity-building programmes;

(b) To make use of the participatory research approach in identifying the reality of the community and providing a knowledge base that covers social problems and available capacities to face them, which leads to planning development programmes and projects on safe bases, and contributes in choosing appropriate approaches and policies;

(c) To resort to the outcome of participatory research processes to activate and develop participation between governmental institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector and the media to achieve sustainable local development.

#### D. OUTCOME OF INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

15. The main outcomes of international and regional experiences as well as some Arab experiences were presented and discussed. Participants highlighted the impact of such outcomes on participation fields, capacity-building, fighting poverty, advancement of women and protection of the environment.

16. Within this theme, the League of Arab States, represented by Mr. Hamad Al-Meshwakhi, presented a document on community development: concept and content, in which he focused on the essence of community development and the intellectual advancement in different development-related fields. The document highlighted the relationship between community development and comprehensive central planning, as well as the development in capital intellect, the findings of “United Nations decades of development” and the outcome of the change in the role of the State and economic patterns as a result to globalization. Mr. Al Meshwakhi tackled as well the bases of community development as to providing the capacity to face development challenges, rectifying economic and social disorders and standing to the lack and weakness of capacities, expertise and competencies. The document stressed the importance of setting community development programmes, plans and policies, in order to ensure more clarity in defining goals and priorities and to motivate and mobilize energies and resources. In conclusion, the light was shed on the importance of popular participation and the role of civil society institutions in activating community development apart from bureaucracy hindrances, which enables the accumulation of human energies instead of marginalizing them, thus leading to expatriation. Recommendations comprised the necessity to focus on expertise, building capacities and activating the participation of competent people, as well as the reliance on the outcome of researches and modern administration in such a way to activate community development and achieve its aims in different fields.

17. In this context, discussions focused on the following points:

(a) To enhance the role of social partners in the project of development is most of the times hindered by the available frameworks on the central level of decision making, particularly since development is not merely an electoral affair. The independent role of the civil society is not institutionalized yet, which raises the problematic of required partnerships and possible outcomes on this level;

(b) To stress the need for studies that accompany the international discussion on community development and its role within globalization, particularly today in view of the repercussions of the financial crisis;

(c) To take interest in preparing public policies and developmental plans as well as implementation methods in addition to the competency in making use of the available resources and capacities, and to seek to establish partnerships with the State in such a way to pave the way for greater roles for development-related organizations, and better circumstances to face the impacts of foreign pressures on national choices and development projects.

18. In this theme, a report on one of the community development projects in the Lebanese South was presented, along with some national experiences presented by the representatives of Lebanon, Jordan, Bahrain, Tunisia and Egypt. The outcomes of those experiences were as follows:

(a) To highlight the risks resulting from the exacerbation of conflicts erupting in several Arab countries and the negative impacts on the failure of development policies, the reluctant popular participation, and the weakening capacities of States to meet the needs of the people;

(b) The discrepant absence of national social policies leads to a decreasing role of social and developmental service-related centres, in view of the intense competition in the civil sector, and a timid presence of civil society organizations. This reality results in problems related to the status of these organizations, their possible roles and the future participation with governmental entities, which emphasizes the necessity to heed their empowerment and enhance their capacities to meet different social needs;

(c) Necessity to enhance the political and social stability, strengthen the participatory connections between civil and public entities to face the burdens of national and local development, and activate partnership with regional organizations and ESCWA in order to enhance capacities and develop individual and institutional capacities to achieve the societal development purposes.

#### E. STRATEGY FOR BUILDING AND DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES

19. ESCWA developed a strategy in the light of the implementation of the participatory intervention in community development approach. The importance of this strategy is reflected in the significance of institutional capacities as to assuming societal work, facing growing problems and responding to changing needs. The presentation of the strategy tackled the main targets, its structure, essence of its programme and targeted and participating categories, as well as expected achievements. The theme reviewed as well the main problems faced by institutional capacities on three levels namely: the overall society, groups and individuals. It reviewed the targets of the strategy for building and developing capacities, its main elements, mechanism of implementation, and the programmes that serve the interests of beneficiary and implementing entities. In conclusion, it was referred to the direct achievements that could stem from the implementation of the strategy, as a network to spread knowledge and disseminate participatory development issues.

20. Discussion focused on the following issues:

(a) It is necessary to implement the strategy for building and developing capacities apart from political prejudices and so on, in times where the region is witnessing various aspects of severe attractions in different fields;

(b) To incite social actors to exert more efforts in enhancing the conditions of integration between the strategy ESCWA is adopting and national plans of concerned Arab countries;

(c) Gradual progress and flexibility in facing problems stemming from weak institutional capacities in view of the changes and modernization in the functions of those institutions, to be in harmony with the dimension of change and modernization implied in the strategy; importance of identifying the situation and circumstances of local communities to ensure the efficiency of the strategy programmes and to avoid possible discrepancies on this level;

(d) The outcome of strategies aimed to build and develop individual and institutional capacities will remain useless unless people adopt a new culture that deems development the result of modernization, advancement and stepping out of retardation. This implies for workers in the field of development to be aware of difficulties and exceptional hindrances in their work linked to enhancing knowledge and developmental culture;

(e) Importance of activating national efforts to follow-up trainees who have participated in activities of building capacities undertaken by ESCWA in cooperation with the Arab Gulf Programme and the League of Arab States, in order to make use of their acquired experience and encourage them to transfer their knowledge, within their countries or on the regional level.

### **III. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

#### **A. OPENING OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING**

21. The meeting was opened on Monday 12 October 2009 at 10 a.m. Mr. Adnan Nasreddine, representative of the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs made the inaugural statement in the name of Arab delegations, since the Lebanese republic held the chairmanship of the twenty-eighth session of the Council of Arab Social Affairs Ministers. He pointed to the aspiration of participants from different Arab countries to make use of the scientific material and applied evidence prepared by ESCWA, as well as of the expertise and different experiences to enhance ways to promote community development, develop its means and ensure its sustainability. Mr. Nasreddine pointed to the extremely slow advancement of Arab countries as to development due to several obstacles, most of which are internal such as illiteracy, weak education, unfair distribution of wealth, absence of a clear developmental vision for decision makers; whereas some obstacles are external reflected in the policies adopted by North States in this context. He concluded by reiterating the importance of partnership and integration between Governments, organizations and individuals in order to overcome the burdens of development, and he stressed the importance of capacity-building for competent cadres to manage the process of development.

22. In his statement, Mr. Walid Hilal, Chief of ESCWA Social Participatory Development Section, welcomed participants and reaffirmed that bringing development issues up as a public rather than merely electoral matter requires expanding frames of knowledge, care and intervention in development processes. He focused as well on the noticeable role undertaken by the participatory community development approach as to enhancing social dialogue on development issues, and to bridging the gap between decision makers and the people on one side, and between decision makers and institutions implementing developmental decisions on the other. Mr. Hilal shed the light on the remarkable achievements in local, national and regional experiences in the field of community development as to cooperation and coordination mechanisms, as well as to adopted developmental approaches. He pointed to the increasing number of institutions, and regional and international organizations adopting the community development approach and exerting efforts to develop it and promote its benefits, which resulted in a firm conviction of Governments, social actors and international and regional organizations that development is a public affair and participation in public affairs is necessary. In this context, Mr. Hilal backed his argument with a set of international commitments and resolutions, as well as policies, legislations and regulations on participation in organizations and administrative texts or procedures. Mr. Hilal concluded his statement by calling upon participants, by virtue of their positions and interests, to translate those texts into practical realities and enhance commitments and resolutions with appropriate mechanisms and approaches to activate participation in development.

23. Within the opening session, Mr. Ibrahim Jaafar El-Souri, representative of the secretariat of the League of Arab States and Director of Development and Social Policies Department and the Technical Committee of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs, commended ESCWA capacity-building programmes within the community development approach, that have benefited from the support of the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs through its decisions. He called for enhancing cooperation and coordination between the Technical Committee of the council and ESCWA in view of implementing and following-up those programmes, in order to acquire the required skills to plan, implement and evaluate the community development process. Mr. El-Souri tackled the international financial crisis and its repercussions on development as well as its current status, as he focused on the new developmental direction adopted by Arab countries and reaffirmed by the Arab Economic and Social Development Summit held in Kuwait in January 2009. The Summit resulted in a set of commitments to fight poverty, hunger, unemployment and plagues, to enhance education and limit mother and child mortality and to provide environmental sustainability. The

representative of the secretariat highlighted the local community development approach as it stems from a basis of partnership and responsibility shared by all authorities in the community responsible for planning and implementing programmes and projects, enhancing the cohesion of Arab communities and ensuring the unification of its texture in order to achieve a comprehensive development revival. In conclusion, Mr. El-Souri reaffirmed the importance of this meeting as to enhancing dialogue, knowledge and skills of governmental and non-governmental authorities as to the local community development approach and its programmes, as he commended the tight partnership with ESCWA, and this meeting which crowns such cooperation.

24. The opening was concluded by Ms. Fatima El Baluchi, the Bahraini Minister of Social Development. Ms. El-Baluchi hoped the meeting would pave the way for a constructive dialogue that would reflect challenges, achievements, experiences and desired targets focused particularly on researchers in the field of development of local communities. She stressed the particular role of civil society organizations, and civil, governmental and private sectors in overcoming the burdens of development. In this context, she pointed to efforts exerted by the Ministry of Social Development in Bahrain to help civil organizations transform their scope of work from mere charity to comprehensive developmental action, as she reaffirmed the necessity to manage civil society institutions which are witnessing an increase in their number and roles, in a professional manner according to a particular scientific approach. Ms. El-Baluchi concluded by reaffirming the adherence to establish means of dialogue and partnership, and thanked the League of Arab States for its efforts and ESCWA for holding such meetings which are an important platform for dialogue concerning social development issues.

#### B. ATTENDANCE

25. The meeting brought together experts and specialists from member countries and other Arab countries, as well as experts and officials from civil society organizations, regional bodies, academic and media institutions, as well as representatives of United Nations agencies and ESCWA staff. Annex I contains a list of participants.

#### C. DATE AND VENUE OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING

26. The expert group meeting was held in the Gulf Hotel in Manamah, Bahrain from 12 to 14 October 2009.

#### D. DOCUMENTS

27. Annex III contains a list of documents presented to the expert group meeting.

## Annex 1\*

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## Annex II

### **EVALUATION OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING**

The expert group meeting achieved its purpose as to discussing the community development approach and evaluate ESCWA approach of participatory development, in view of the presented cognitive expertise and means to organize and manage development as well as its participatory mechanisms, through the discussion of ESCWA programmes and projects in the field of community development with a focus on the manual for the orientation of development processes, the manual for the orientation of participatory research and the strategy for building individual and institutional capacities. The meeting succeeded as well in arousing the interest of experts on the different themes that covered community development concepts, its modern orientations and national experiences while focusing on the main successes and failures as well as learned lessons. Results of the evaluation questionnaire adopted by ESCWA, were as follows, as they included the opinions and remarks of participants classified according to the following sections and questions:

#### (1) Quality of the expert group meeting

First question: how do you evaluate the quality of the expert group meeting in general?

very good	good	average	bad	very bad
3 (27.27 per cent)	7 (63.64 per cent)	1 (9.09 per cent)	0	0

#### (2) Expectations of participants

Question 2: what were your expectations as to the meeting?

- Exchange of opinions, experiences and expertise as to the implementation of the community development approach, and establishment of a basis for future interaction and communication between participants;
- Enhancement of knowledge and dialogue on participatory development according to ESCWA approach;
- Presenting proposals and observations that would enrich the draft manual of local community development.

Question 3: were your expectations met?

yes	no	partly
5 (45.45 per cent)	0	6 (54.55 per cent)

#### (3) Efficiency of the expert group meeting

Question 4: how do you evaluate the efficiency of the meeting as to the following aspects?

Question 4-a: importance of the topic as to the field of work and experience

very good	good	average	bad	very bad	no answer
3 (27.27 per cent)	7 (63.64 per cent)	0	0	0	1 (9.09 per cent)

Question 4-b: acquired information and skills that may assist you in future work

very good	good	average	bad	very bad	no answer
2 (18.18 per cent)	3 (27.27 per cent)	4 (36.36 per cent)	0	0	2 (18.18 per cent)

Question 4-c: paving the way for exchange of information with other participants in the meeting

very good	good	average	bad	very bad	no answer
6 (54.55 per cent)	4 (36.36 per cent)	0	0	0	1 (9.09 per cent)

Question 4-d: paving the way for establishing new and useful work communications

very good	good	average	bad	very bad	no answer
7 (63.64 per cent)	2 (18.18 per cent)	1 (9.09 per cent)	0	0	1 (9.09 per cent)

Question 4-e: extent of benefit from the exchange of expertise and experience between participants

very good	good	average	bad	very bad	no answer
3 (27.27 per cent)	5 (45.45 per cent)	2 (18.18 per cent)	0	0	1 (9.09 per cent)

(4) Organization of the meeting and available means

Question 5: how do you evaluate the expert group meeting efficiency as to the following aspects:

Question 5-a: clarity of the presentation

very good	good	average	bad	very bad	no answer
2 (18.18 per cent)	6 (54.55 per cent)	2 (18.18 per cent)	0	0	1 (9.09 per cent)

Question 5-b: quality of the written material distributed by organizers

very good	good	average	bad	very bad	no answer
4 (36.36 per cent)	4 (36.36 per cent)	2 (18.18 per cent)	0	0	1 (9.09 per cent)

Question 5-c: organizational arrangements before and during the expert group meeting

very good	good	average	bad	very bad	no answer
4 (36.36 per cent)	4 (36.36 per cent)	2 (18.18 per cent)	0	0	1 (9.09 per cent)

(5) Duration of the expert group meeting

Question 6: the duration of the meeting should have been:

shorter	the same	longer
0	7 (63.64 per cent)	4 (36.36 per cent)

In case the answer was for the meeting to be longer or shorter, what was (were) exactly the session(s) that should have been abridged or expanded during the meeting:

- Expansion of discussions in the different sessions of the meeting, particularly the one related to the experiences of countries

(2) Acquired information

Question 7: will you be able to make use of the information acquired during the meeting in your work or transfer such information to other experts within your country or your society?

to some extent	no	yes
0	0	11 (100 per cent)

Question 8: do you recommend the attendance of other experts from your country or scope of work to future similar workshops?

to some extent	no	yes
2 (18.18 per cent)	0	9 (81.82 per cent)

(7) Participation in meetings

Question 7: have you participated in activities on the same topic with other organizations?

no	yes
5 (45.45 per cent)	6 (54.55 per cent)

If the answer is yes, what is the topic, what is the organization, where and when?

- Participation between Governments and civil society organizations in the local community development in Yemen;
- Challenges to community development in Lebanon, World Bank and Prime Minister Office , Beirut, 2005;
- Participatory development concept, ESCWA;
- Role of civil organizations in the development of community – United Nations Development Programme – Beirut 2005;
- Participatory community development in post-conflict countries, ESCWA, Beirut, June 2009.

Question 10: do you wish for follow-up activities to be organized?

no	yes
0	11 (100 per cent)

In case the answer is yes, kindly define the kind of such activities

- Continual communication and monitoring of implemented recommendations as well as follow-up to the implementation of learned lessons;
- Completion of the implementation of the strategy for individual and institutional capacity-building in member countries;
- Expanded discussion of the manual for participatory local community development;
- Communication through the organization of small workshops to present member countries experiences in the field of community development, and to reflect problems, hindrances and achievements including the adopted evaluation standards;
- Holding expert group meetings that would be more focused on modern techniques to implement the community development approach (on both regional and international levels);
- Focusing on building capacities, enhancing participation, and making use of the exchange of member countries experiences in this field.

Question 11: do you have any suggestions to improve and develop similar meetings in the future?

- Preparation and distribution of working papers previously to participants, to enable them to read them, prepare discussion points and avoid repetition and straying beyond the presented topic;
- To provide more time for discussions;
- To hold regional workshops to train researchers and focus on regional experiences;
- Participation of social actors, including local leaders in similar meetings.

Question 12: do you have any observations, comments or questions to ESCWA concerning the meeting?

- Extension of gratitude to ESCWA for the efforts exerted to present technical assistance and advisory services to member countries, and carefully investing its expertise to achieve the purpose of the meeting;
- Commendation of the quality of organization and welcoming the opinions of all participants;
- To make use of ESCWA programmes as to enhancing participatory capacities and developing related mechanisms.

Annex III

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

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title
Agenda
Information note
Draft manual for local community development
Manual for participatory research in local community development in ESCWA member countries
ورقة خلفية بعنوان "استراتيجية بناء وتطوير القدرات الفردية والمؤسسية"
تقرير حول منهج الإسكوا في برامج ومشاريع التنمية المحلية
دراسة خلفية حول برنامج "شروق": البرنامج القومي للتنمية الريفية المتكاملة في جمهورية مصر العربية، إنجازات وتحديات
ورقة خلفية بعنوان "بناء قدرات العاملين في مراكز الخدمات الإنمائية في لبنان"
Social Development Bulletin: "Setting the Scene making the case"
Press release
Opening statement of Mr. Walid Hilal, Chief of the Social Participatory Development Section
Evaluation questionnaire

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