

RCM Arab States 2010

Draft for Consultation with MDG Thematic Working Group

11-12 November 2010

Beirut

Thematic Working Group on MDGs

Working Group Members

Agency	Focal Point	Remarks on PPT and Report	Attended the 5 th meeting of TWG on Arab MDGs (10 Nov 2010)
ESCWA (Chair)	Mr. Tarik Alami		Yes
UNICEF	Ms. Hasmik Egian	X	Yes
WHO EMRO	Mr. Mohamed Ali		No
ITU	Ms. Nefertiti Ali		No
UNESCO	Mr. Hejazi Idriss		Yes
UNIFEM	Ms. Dena Assaf		Yes
UNDP	Mr. Khalid Abu-Ismaïl		Yes
UNAIDS	Mr. Hamidreza Setayesh		Yes
ILO	Ms. Shaza Al-Jondi	X	Yes
UNFPA	Mr. Abdallah Zoubi		No
UNEP	Ms. Melanie Hutchinson	X	No
LAS	Mr. Tarek Nabulsi	X	Yes

Key Summary of Achievements/Developments in 2010

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

Key Challenges Affecting Implementation

A- Challenges facing the work of TWG:

- Tight Deadlines, some agencies believed that more time should be given to them to provide inputs/ comments. **Proposed Action:** provide a timeline for the preparations of the 2011 MDGs report so agencies can plan commitments and prepare inputs
- Coordination among contributing agencies: Late delivery of commitment from some agencies. **Proposed Action:** provide a timeline for the preparations of the 2011 MDGs report so agencies can plan commitments and prepare inputs
- Data issues: accuracy and lack of recent data and information. There was a conflict between data from national sources compared to international ones. **Proposed Action:** decide among participants on the TWG and the drafting committee at the outset on a cut-off date and whether national or international sources of data should be used.
- Changing representations of technical members. Some countries and UN agencies kept changing representations, and the suggestion here is to the extent possible have tasked members who could stay throughout the process. **Proposed Actions:** (1) provide a timeline for the preparations of the 2011 MDGs report so agencies can plan commitments and prepare inputs, (2) agencies provide a focal point and an alternate focal point.
- Working with both languages was an issue: This caused some agencies to spend a substantial amount of time on translating as there are some non- Arab speakers working on the report and other related activities. This is why a decision should be reached on working language for agencies to assign appropriate personnel. **Proposed Action:** further discussion with TWG on whether the working language of the draft should be English and once finalized the draft will be translated into Arabic.

B- Challenges facing the attainment of the MDGs:

A- General

- The need of capacity development for the all main stakeholders in the MDGs related fields in the Arab region, including civil society, private sector as well as other non-traditional agents of change;
- The urgent need for coordination efforts among UN agencies, LAS, NGOs, Regional and International Development Funds, Research Entities and all other socio-economic development bodies in the Arab region. In this regard, the TWG's future activities, particularly the normative, should ensure and in close cooperation with and in accordance of the respective mandates of the members of the TWG, that regional and sub-regional assessments add value to national strategies in attaining the MDGs. In addition, Identifying gaps, cases where countries experienced retreat/regression in the attainment of MDGs, and priorities should be based on previous regional MDGs reports, recent LAS-UN Arab MDGs Report 2010, national MDGs reports and the outcome of the MDGs Summit (September 2010);
- Sub-regional disparities as well as conflicts, occupations and political instability calls into question the possibility of achieving the MDGs.

B- For the attainment of the MDGs in the Arab region:

- Number of poor, based on national lower poverty lines, has increased in the last ten years in the Arab region from **34.9 to 35.2 millions**.
 - Alarmingly, the LDCs have experienced an increase in absolute number of poor from **7.7 to 9.3** millions.
- There has been insufficient progress in the Arab region to meet the hunger target, in particular, the LDCs have experienced a very marginal progress.
 - According to most recent data 25 percent (**17 millions**) are undernourished in the LDCs.
 - The target is to reduce the proportion of undernourished to 15 per cent by 2015. Even if the LDCs meet the target, which is unlikely, around **13 million people** in the LDCs will still be considered undernourished in 2015.
- Unemployment is a major development challenge in most Arab countries and unemployment rates in the 2000s are only marginally lower than in the 1990s.
 - Arab LDCs have witnessed a dramatic increase in unemployment rates from around 14 percent to around **19 percent**.
 - The employment-to-population ration in the Arab region is **54%** which is eight percent below the average of other developing regions.
- Progress has been made related to education, but alarmingly some countries have shown sign of regression.
 - OPT and Lebanon experienced **regression in net enrollment ratios**.
 - Egypt, Mauritania, Sudan and Yemen experienced **regression in primary education completion rates**.

- The Arab region is not on track to meet the target related to maternal mortality and under-five mortality rates.
 - With the current trend, maternal mortality rates in the Arab region are expected to reach 250 in 2015, while the target is 75 (/100.000). Maternal mortality rates in the Arab LDC are **772/100.000** compared to **28/100.000** in GCC countries.
 - Concerning under-five mortality rates, the LDCs are especially lagging behind. With the current trend; under-five mortality rate in the LDCs will reach 99 in 2015 , while the target is 45 (/1,000 live births). In the Arab LDC **one in ten children die before the age of five**, this rate is around **5 times higher** than that of any GCC country.
- Sub-regional disparities, Conflict & instability, Gender, Water, Urban – Rural divide, Structural fragility and Jobless growth.

C- For the work of the TWG on MDGs:

- Absence of real action plan of the TWG;
- Limited resources;
- Lack of commitment from TWG members;
- Coordination with other TWGs since there is an interdependency between the attainment of the MDGs, food crisis and climate change. In addition, to other unpredictable force-majeure(s) example: wars, economic crises (as in 2008), natural catastrophes, etc.

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

- Data issues (national versus international); further discussions to decide on a data standard
- Disharmony of contributions coming from different agencies; establish comprehensible guidelines to be followed by all contributors
- Participation/frequency in meetings of the drafting committee; establish a clear meeting schedule in advance

Amendments to the TWG Workplan

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

- The change of the theme of the report from “the International Financial Crisis” to “***the Global Economic Crises***”.
- The launch of the report was decided to be during the MDG +10 Summit but due to due to the tight schedule of the High Level Officials attending the Summit which would not secure the appropriate audience, it was agreed with LAS to organize an appropriate regional launch similar to what other regions did. The LAS has proposed to host the launch event in its headquarters in Cairo. The exact date will be agreed upon in coordination with LAS and the Arab Ministers Council for Social Affairs.

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- ESCWA as the convener of the TWG on MDGs in collaboration with members of TWG, is discussing a regional action plan/roadmap for 2015. The roadmap will attempt to identify the basic elements for developing a broadly shared and integrated framework for addressing development/emerging challenges in the region and focusing on the off-track countries. The roadmap could provide a platform for regional and sub-regional action in support of the MDGs and at the same time will optimize the efforts and enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations agencies, LAS and other regional institutions in support of the attainment of the MDGs. The basic elements of the roadmap takes into account the following deliverables:
 1. Building up Knowledge and raising awareness (assessment of progress, studies, research, policy briefs, development of regional MDGs web page as reference to stakeholders...)
 2. Capacity development (seminars, workshops, exchanging best practices...)
 3. Advocacy (forums, meetings, online discussions and exchange of views via regional MDGs web page...)
 4. Regional cooperation in producing regional public goods (normative assessment on cross border issues, intra-trade, ODV, Investment, infrastructure, environment,..) identify

2010 Workplan Implementation Progress

No.	Key Activity	Main Output	Status of Implementation	Expected Completion Date
1	Regional Consultative Meeting on the attainment of the MDGs in the Arab Region titled: “Senior Officials Meeting of the Arab Ministers Council for Social Affairs”, (LAS Secretariat, Cairo, 9-10 June 2010).	Report of the meeting including decisions related to the finalization of the LAS-UN Joint MDGs Report 2010 and the MDG +10 Summit.	Implemented	N/A
2	Substantive Session of the Arab Ministers of Social Affairs titled “Social gaps with respect to the Millennium Development Goals” (LAS Secretariat, Cairo, 30 June 2010).	Endorsement of the LAS-UN MDGs Report 2010 (as detailed in the decisions of Ministerial session).	Implemented. Decisions of session available at: http://www.escwa.un.org/rcm/editor/Download.asp?table_name=rcm_themes&fileid_name=id&FileID=203	N/A
3	LAS-UN joint Arab MDGs report titled “ <i>The Third Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises</i> ”.	The report both in Arabic and English.	• English version is in the printing process. Soft Copy available at: http://www.escwa.un.org/rcm/editor/	End of October 2010

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			Download.asp?table_name=rcm_the_mes&field_name=id&FileID=198 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arabic version is under final editing and design.	
4	The Launch of “ <i>The Third Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises</i> ”.	High level Arab regional meeting to launch the report.	In progress	December 2010
5	The adoption of the amendments on the TOR (road map) of the TWG on Arab MDGs (back to back with the 14 th RCM, 11-12 November 2010).	Revised TOR of the TWG on Arab MDGs	In progress	November 2010

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ANNEXES

- A : TWG Meetings 2010
- B: TWG Terms of Reference
- C: 2010 Workplan of the TWG

ANNEX A - TWG Meetings

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

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			the regular session of the Arab Ministers Council for Social Affairs (LAS Secretariat, Cairo, 30 June 2010) and the way forward after the Ministerial session.
10 November 2010	Beirut	Prepared by the convener of TWG on Arab MDGs	<u>5th Meeting of TWG:</u> The meeting will be held to review the preparations for the 14th RCM in addition to further discuss and elaborate the next steps of the TWG .
23 July 2010	Beirut	Prepared by the convener of TWG on Arab MDGs	<u>1st meeting of the Drafting group:</u> The meeting's purpose was to agree on the responsibilities of the drafting committee and the set the way forward to achieve them.
11 December 2009	Beirut	Prepared by the convener of TWG on Arab MDGs	<u>2nd meeting of the Drafting group:</u> The meeting was held to discuss how to proceed in the preparations of the LAS-UN joint MDGs report 2010 after the first draft was submitted.
19-24 February 2010	Beirut	Prepared by the convener of TWG on Arab MDGs Decisions of meeting available at: http://www.escwa.un.org/rcm/editor/Download.asp?table_name=rcm_themes&field_name=id&FileID=185	<u>3rd Meeting of the Drafting Group:</u> The purpose of this extensive meeting was to review the revised zero draft chapters prepared by the respective lead agencies and then to consolidate them in order to reach a consistent and coherent zero draft of the report.
11-13 June 2010	Cairo	Prepared by the convener of TWG on Arab MDGs	<u>4th meeting of the drafting committee:</u> The meeting was held for the purpose of revising the Arabic draft Report based on the comments received from the Senior Officials Meeting and from the 3rd Meeting of the TWG, and then to agree on the steps to be taken to reach a final draft that will be presented to the upcoming meeting of the

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			Arab Ministers Council for Social Affairs (Cairo, 30 June 2010) for adoption at the Ministerial level
20 June 2010	Teleconference meeting	No	<u>5th meeting of the Drafting Group:</u> The meeting was set to discuss the finalization of the final Arabic draft of the report that will be presented in the meeting of the Arab Ministers Council for Social Affairs.
2-3 August 2010	Cairo	No	<u>6th meeting of the Drafting Group:</u> This meeting was held to finalize the English version of the report after incorporating the necessary modifications to match the Arabic version which was endorsed by the Arab ministers of social affairs.

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

- **The 1st TOR of TWG was agreed upon during the 1st meeting of the TWG on Arab MDGs (Beirut, 23 July 2009).**
- **Ongoing discussions are currently being held among TWG members for setting new TOR (objectives, road map 2011-2015, responsibilities, etc.).**

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

No.	Key Activity	Status of Implementation	Expected Completion Date
1	LAS-UN joint Arab MDGs report titled “ <i>The Third Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises</i> ”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• English version is in the printing process.• Arab version is under final editing and design.	End of October 2010
2	The amendments on the TOR (road map for 2015) of the TWG on Arab MDGs (back to back with the 14 th RCM, 11-12 November 2010).	In progress	November 2010
3	The Launch of “ <i>The Third Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises</i> ”.	In progress	December 2010
4	TWG meeting to discuss the draft outline of “the 2011 MDGs Report”.	In progress	December 2010