**Workshop on Time Use Statistics in Arabic Speaking Countries**

**Amman, Jordan, 25 – 28 April 2011**

**Conclusions and recommendations**

1. The workshop expressed its appreciation to the Department of Statistics of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for hosting the workshop and for extending its hospitality to the participants, as well as to ESCWA and to UN Statistics Division for organizing and conducting the workshop.
2. The participants concluded that the time use surveys represent a source of critical statistics for assessing the social and economic phenomena that are not covered by other regular statistical data collections at national level. This is especially true for a series of gender issues, such as unpaid domestic work, women’s participation in the informal sector labor force and overall burden of work of women. Time use surveys produce statistics that provide quantitative information on living conditions, poverty, intra-household decision making, volunteering, civic participation, cultural and religious customs – all topics that do not usually fall under the coverage of the national statistical system, yet are crucial to identifying social patterns, environment and development.
3. Therefore, the workshop concluded that the time use survey can meet numerous needs for statistics – yet this requires careful setting of the objectives of the surveys as that has critical impact on the design of survey instruments. In consequence, it is necessary to conduct comprehensive and exhaustive consultations with all stakeholders including relevant NGOs and national statistical machineries in order to ensure the fullest exploitation of collected time use statistics.
4. In assessing the role of the time use survey in the national statistical system, the workshop deliberated at length its relationship to labor force survey and it concluded that the time use survey certainly cannot replace the comprehensive array of statistics regularly provided by the labor force survey – a well established and developed data collection exercise in countries in the region. It can, however, complement labor statistics by acquiring data on informal sector and child labor.
5. The workshop also clearly underlined the importance of time use survey in computing satellite accounts – a monetary valuation of unpaid domestic work that significantly improves the overall measures of wellbeing of population that go beyond the GDP per capita indicator.
6. The workshop discussed at length different features of time use surveys, such as the long and short form, open-ended diaries, time-intervals, coding, and dissemination of data, accompanied by hands-on exercises. It concluded that the complexity of the methodological requirements for a successful time use survey requires careful and consistent methodological approach at the level of the national statistical office and the involvement of different subject-matter specialists within the office, including sample specialists, gender statisticians, social statisticians, demographers, national accounts and economic statisticians and so forth.
7. The workshop reviewed the time use surveys conducted to date in the Arab countries. It concluded that these experiences are extremely useful and that they provide a sound basis for further development and improvement. The participants debated at length different features of these surveys, thus acquiring the necessary knowledge related to previous experiences.
8. The workshop noted that these time use surveys conducted in Arab countries to date differ in scope, coverage and approach, as well as dissemination and exploitation of data. In the context, the participants concluded that there is a need for better coordination at regional level in terms of harmonization of objectives and accompanying methodologies of time use surveys.
9. In terms of methodological features of the time use surveys, the workshop concluded that the development and the implementation of time use activities classification represent a most comprehensive challenge. While the taxonomy of activities a person undertakes in the period of twenty four hours by itself is a complex undertaking, its implementation on the actual responses and coding of the activities as reported by the respondents adds an additional layer of multifaceted methodological and practical requirements.
10. In that context, the use of the International Classification of Time Use Activities (ICATUS) as developed by the United Nations Statistics Division and reviewed to a certain extent at the workshop, appears to represent a solid and useful practical instrument for planning and designing time use surveys in the Arab countries. Its focus on accurate measuring of paid and unpaid work, as well as five levels of hierarchical structure, down to the 363 six-digits subclasses, provides a comprehensive starting point. The workshop noted that ICATUS has been used directly, or in modified and adapted formats, in almost all developing countries that undertook a time use survey in the past decade.
11. In terms of following-up on this workshop, the participants requested that ESCWA, in cooperation and guidance from the United Nations Statistics Division, explores the possibility of:
	1. Developing a project for harmonizing time use surveys in the region, including well-defined objectives of the survey, thus allowing for better regional comparison and exploitation of data, primarily from the perspective of building sound and reliable national and regional gender statistics.
	2. Calls on UNSD to update and modify ICATUS in view of countries’ feedback during the workshop.
	3. Establishing a task force for Arab countries on time use Statistics to develop an action plan to convene capacity building workshop, expert group meeting and developing related materials.

In Amman, Jordan

28 April 2011