



**UN-ESCWA**  
UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC & SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

**Regional Discussion**  
**Western Asia & Arab Region**  
**CSD-16**  
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**Agriculture, Rural Development, Land, Drought & Desertification**

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- **The RIM report identifies numerous barriers and constraints affecting the Western Asia & Arab Region**
  - **Extreme water scarcity**
  - **Water distribution disparity between sectors & regions**
  - **Challenge of development under conditions of crisis**
  - **Burgeoning youth population**
  - **Poor agricultural extension services**
  - **Etc.**

## 1. Promoting traditional cultures for income generation & employment creation by encouraging productivity gains and enhanced competitiveness

- Organic agriculture has potential, but improving traditional cultures can create income & employment opportunities for rural development
- Commodity price increases could increase costs, but also create opportunities for rural economies in local/regional markets
- **Producer clusters can work: economies of scale & knowledge sharing**



# Lessons Learned & Best Practices



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## 2. Assisting small, medium and large agricultural and agro-industrial food producers with environmental, health and safety standards is central to ensuring food safety for the consumer and enhancing the competitiveness of the producer (in local & international markets)

- Needs to be considered in an integrated sustainable development framework
- National Environment and Trade Committees in some Arab countries examining topic of food safety through inter-ministerial, public-private forums, e.g., Yemen on Fisheries (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2007/WP.2)



Arab Fisheries Export Levels (2004)



Yemeni Industrial Zones & Fishing Ports



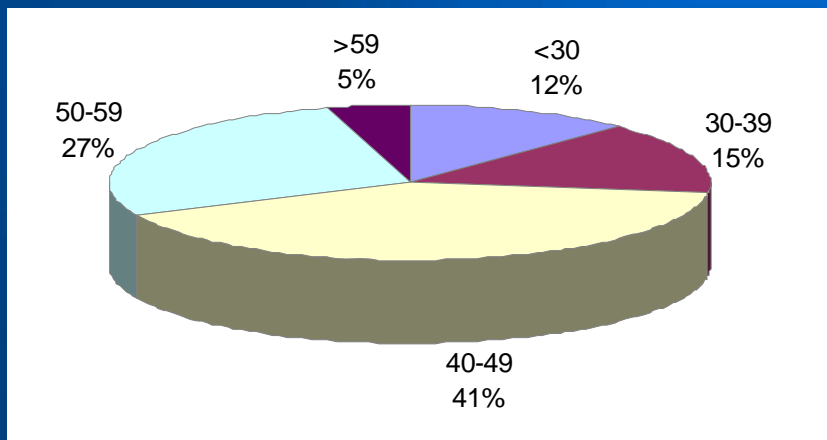
## 3. Dissemination and capacity building in the use of appropriate and affordable technologies through pilot projects



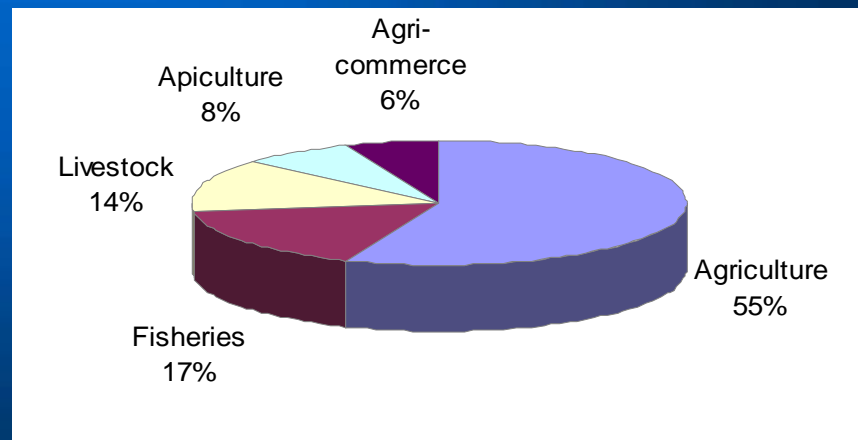
- **Learning by doing – but needs to be complemented by trust-building with the local community and regular communication**
- **Testing new techniques should be encouraged**

## 4. Micro-credit provides effective source of financing, particularly in rural and remote communities seeking to overcome crisis

- Disproportionate share of male borrowers
- Challenging to attract women and younger quintiles given familial structure of small agricultural enterprises



Age Distribution Micro-Credit Loans

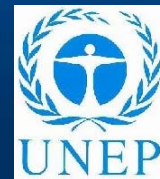
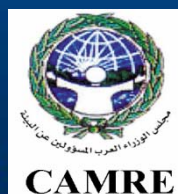


Micro-Credit Loan Distribution by Sector



## 5. Partnerships central to making programs and projects work...particularly regional partnerships

- Preparation of regional CSD preparations & RIM report outcome of cooperation between League of Arab States, ESCWA & UNEP/ROWA under CAMRE, with input from Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones & Dry Lands (ACSAD), Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) & International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)
- Partnership with the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development (AAAID) provided support for micro-credit initiative in South Lebanon; Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) introduction of appropriate technologies for poverty alleviation
- **Inter-UN agency partnership and cooperation with NGOs, financial institutions and development banks allow for greater knowledge sharing and program effectiveness.**
- Partnerships with municipalities & local communities, e.g., MPTC/Yemen







## **Other Important Issues for Possible Consideration & Discussion:**

- **Climate Change**
  - Socio-economic vulnerability of agricultural sector and rural and remote communities to climate change
  - Climate change adaptation associated with drought & desertification
- **Agricultural commodity price volatility**
  - Impact on rural livelihoods, particularly women and youth
  - Assessing threats to food security and socio-economic stability in urban and rural centers
  - Impacts on food and fodder
- **Linkages between agriculture & integrated water resources management**

*Thank You!*