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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Fifth Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change
Negotiations for the Arab Countries
Cairo-Egypt, 17- 19 November 2015

INFORMATION NOTE

A. BACKGROUND

The global negotiations process on climate change towards achieving a new international agreement on the climate represents a historic opportunity to find solutions that will reduce emissions and creates growth and prosperity for all countries. The uniqueness of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference /Conference of Parties (UNFCCC/COP-21) within an extensive negotiations' year, is due to the fact that it is one of the biggest international summits on climate change that will lead to the adoption of a universal binding agreement on climate change which will provide a framework for transition towards emissions reduction targets, mobilization of funds for developing countries and implementing ambitious solutions.

The governments of Arab countries have shown a keen interest to actively participate in the preparatory processes at regional and global levels as well as in hosting in Qatar the negotiation processes of the COP 18 in 2012. While each country in the region has slightly different needs and interests, it has been recognised that many of the challenges in the Arab region are similar and hence the national interests and approaches to the negotiations tend to show significant similarity.

Therefore, it is important to expand a common vision for climate change negotiations to be able to move the agenda forward towards successful future negotiations. Enhanced communication and exchange of information between countries in the region can contribute to better understanding of common interests and improved common positions to increase the chances for achieving meaningful results in climate change negotiations. In this respect, negotiators and those supporting the national negotiation teams require an in depth understanding of the history of the negotiation process on climate change and the recent developments and outcomes from COP meetings. This is particularly important for junior staff from the respective government institutions which will support their negotiation teams and may eventually take over the role of negotiators in the future.

B. SCOPE

Upon a request for support through Technical Cooperation from the League of Arab States (LAS) ESCWA jointly with the LAS conducted between 22 and 24 October 2013 a three day "Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries" in Amman, Jordan. The workshop was hosted by the ESCWA Technology Centre at the facilities of the Jordanian Royal Scientific Society and attended by 16 participants from nine Member States. The ESCWA-LAS training course contributed to enhanced knowledge and strengthened capacity of representatives and negotiators from Arab countries to adequately address issues related to climate change and the respective national concerns for mitigation and adaptation actions for upcoming future negotiation processes on climate change. With the acquired knowledge the Arab negotiators and representatives are better equipped to address climate change related negotiations at regional and global level.

In its 25th Session held in November 2013, CAMRE passed resolution 421 commending the cooperation between LAS and ESCWA in holding a training workshop in October 2013 to improve national negotiation skills for climate change negotiations of Arab negotiators. The resolution also requested holding two other workshops in 2014, with at least one of them taking place before the meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies that is taking place in Bonn, Germany from 4 to 15 June 2014 and the other workshop to be convened before the COP20.

In response to LAS resolution, ESCWA and LAS organized the second training workshop between 26 and 28 May 2014 in Amman, Jordan. The training was based on ESWAA developed “Guide on Climate Change Negotiations for Representatives and Negotiators from Arab Countries” and aimed to develop a better understanding of the climate change policy framework, and considering also the challenges currently faced by climate change negotiators in making progress towards new agreements, taking into account the on-going negotiations. The workshop was attended by 40 participants from 13 Arab countries.

Within the same context, LAS requested from ESCWA to organize a third workshop in preparation for the global negotiations that took place at the UNFCCC COP-20 in Lima-Peru during the period 1-12 December 2014. The workshop that was hosted by the Environment Public Authority in Kuwait during the period 11-13 November 2014 allowed the exchange of experiences and knowledge sharing between senior negotiators and the future generation of negotiators from different countries in the region on the development of strategies for improved common positions of Arab countries during the negotiation process. The workshop was attended by 55 participants from 12 countries. The Fourth Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries was held in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment in Qatar during 19-21 May 2015. The workshop was attended by more than 60 participants from 12 countries and was followed by an Arab-Franco Dialogue between the Arab Negotiation Team and the French delegation chaired by the Vice-President of the COP-21.

ESCWA and LAS as well as the United Nations Environment Programme, the Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA) continue to cooperate to build the capacity of negotiators in member countries in preparation for the UNFCCC/COP 21 that will be held in Paris during the period 30 November - 11 December 2015 by organizing this Fifth Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries during the 17-19 November 2015.

C. OBJECTIVES

The workshop seeks to receive guidance for future negotiations based on the updated ESCWA Guide on Climate Change Negotiations for Representatives and Negotiators from Arab Countries, and discuss respective national experiences. It aims to:

- Develop a comprehensive overview of the outcomes and implications of the latest ad-hoc working groups’ sessions took place during 2015;
- Build on the outcomes of the negotiations that took place on Durban Platform for Action (ADP) during October 2015 and prepare for the final round of negotiations in preparation for the UNFCCC/COP 21 in Paris;
- Develop an understanding of relevant factors contributing to successful negotiations on climate change, including methods to bring in new proposals and amend proposals by others, building partnerships with other parties to achieve common goals;
- Establish and strengthen the dialogue between official senior negotiators and future generation of negotiators in Arab countries for improving knowledge and negotiation skills on climate change issues;
- Develop the understanding of potentials for common positions between countries in the region taking into consideration the challenges and limits of such common positions; and

- Understand possible mitigation actions in key sectors by developing countries within the scope of the new post-2020 climate change agreement with the full recognition of the common but differentiated responsibilities principle.

D. FOCUS AREAS

The workshop will discuss the following issues in relation to climate change negotiations:

- Measures and messages on key climate change issues related to the new climate change agreement such as Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) and the Arab position towards the UNFCCC Post-2020 agreement in the COP-21;
- Current status of the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC's) in the Arab countries and linkage to national sectoral policies in key sectors such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, trade, economic development, civil aviation, etc;
- Financing options within the new agreement under the Green Climate Fund and capacity building needs for the Arab countries with a focus on technology needs;
- Impacts of implementation of response measures on key sectors and sustainable development policies in the region within the new post-2015 agenda and the recently endorsed Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's); and
- Science-policy interface in terms of interpretation of climate change projection outputs for the Arab region to policy messages for Arab negotiators in the COP 21.

E. ORGANIZATION AND VENUE OF THE MEETING

The workshop is organized by ESCWA and LAS, in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme/Regional Office for Western Asia (UNEP/ROWA) and will be held at LAS Headquarters in Cairo, Egypt during the period 17-19 November 2015. The Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED) will provide the logistical support for the organization of the workshop.

F. PARTICIPANTS

Climate experts from ministries responsible for climate change negotiation in the Arab member states are invited to participate in the workshop as well as climate experts and negotiators contributing to the COP. Details on accommodation arrangements and logistical matters will be sent to the nominated participants in due time via the email.

G. CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence and inquiries concerning the workshop should be addressed to:

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