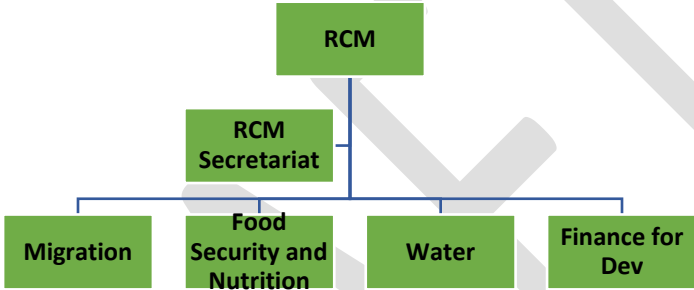# RCM and Regional UNSDG for Arab States
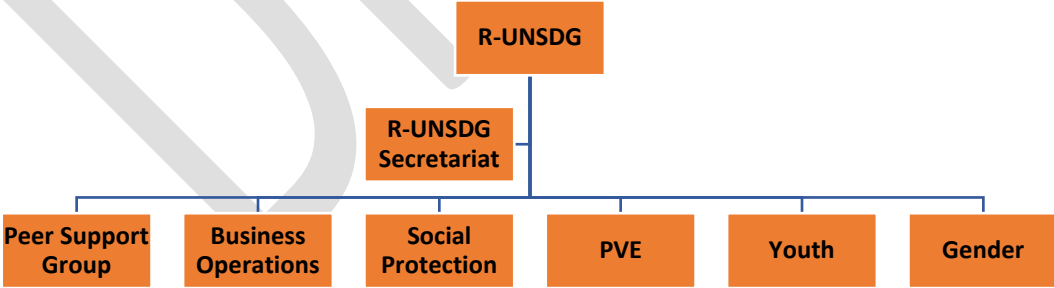## *Discussion Paper on Regional Working Groups*

Background

Both the Regional UNSDG and the RCM have established Working Groups (WG) and Task Forces (TF) in selected priority areas.

The RCM currently has four WGs, namely: 1) Food Security and Nutrition, 2) International Migration, 3) Water, and 4) Financing for Sustainable Development. Each WG is led by one or more regional entity. They set annual workplans, coordinate their outputs and activities accordingly and report back to the RCM once a year.
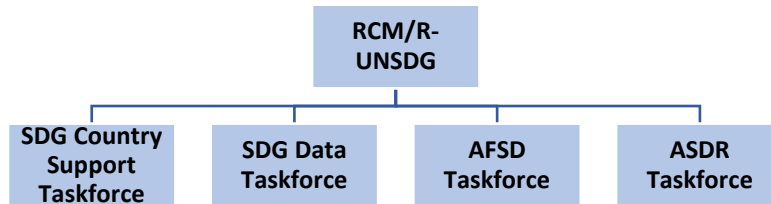

The R-UNDG currently has four WGs, namely 1) Gender, 2) Youth, 3) Prevention of Violent Extremism, and 4) Social Protection, in addition to an UNDAF Peer Support Group s and a Business Operations Working Group. These WGs ensure coordinated responses at the regional level and provide quality technical support and advice to UNCTs at the national level. They generally meet on a quarterly basis, and report back to the Regional UNSDG annually.
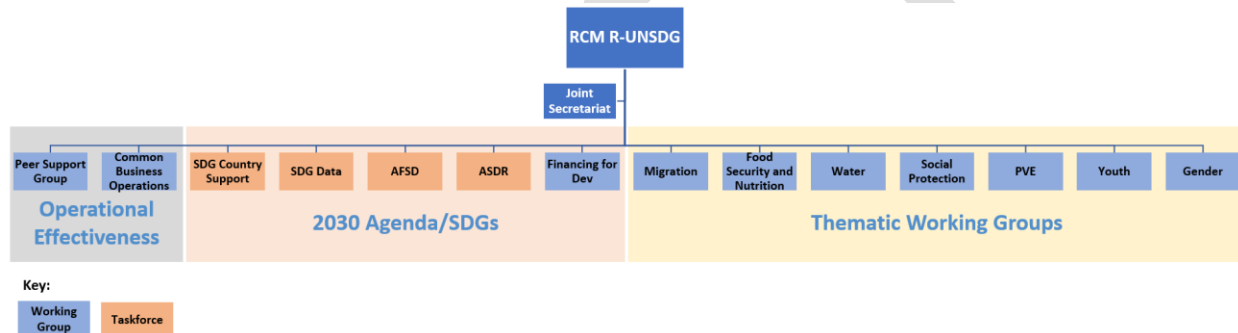

In addition, a Joint RCM R-UNDG Working Group on the 2030 Agenda was established in 2017 by adapting and streamlining the efforts of existing regional groups under one joint umbrella WG. This Joint WG co-chaired by ESCWA and R-UNDG has four TFs or sub-groups, namely: 1) Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, 2) Arab Sustainable Development Report, 3) SDG Country Support, and 4)

SDG Data. The four TFs report to the Joint WG on the 2030 Agenda, which meets annually during the RCM-R-UNDG meeting.

A Single Coordination Architecture

To enhance cooperation and reduce duplication, it has been agreed to merge all RCM and R-UNSDG Working Groups and Taskforces under a single coordination architecture that reports to the joint RCM R-UNSDG meeting.

To further simplify and harmonise this single coordination architecture, it has been agreed to establish two categories of groups, namely Working Groups and Networks, as follows:
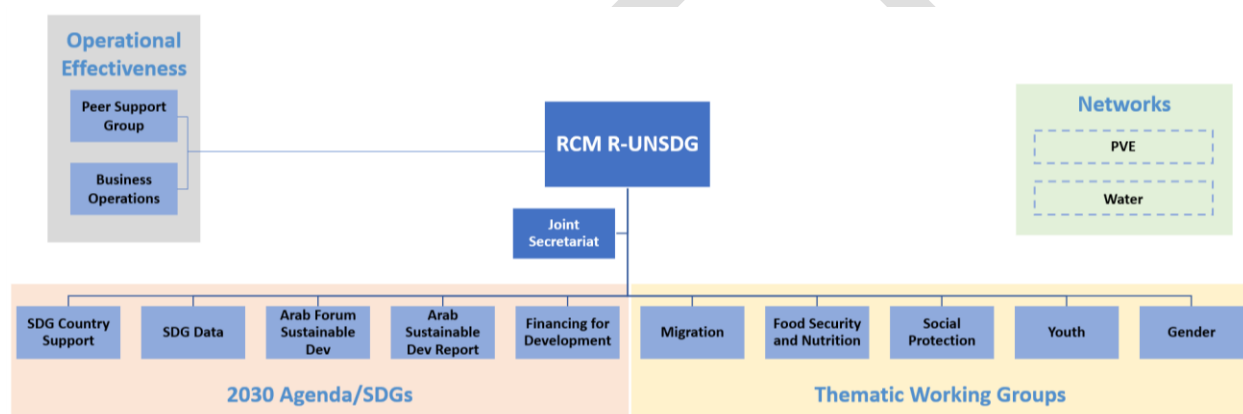
- **Working Groups** are **formal mechanisms** to support UNDS coordination around a specific identified issue and could be either thematic and/or functional/operational in nature. Each Working Group would have a **specifically defined Terms of Reference**, would **meet 2-4 times a year** and would be required to identify a **limited number of key deliverables** at the start of each year, and report back on progress to the RCM R-UNSDG joint meeting on an annual basis, or as required. The Chair/Co-Chairs of Working Groups will be agreed on by the Regional Directors based on mandate and capacity as relevant to the focus of the Working Group. Membership will be open to all UN entities on an opt-in basis. Regional partners may also be included as Chairs/Co-Chairs or members of Working Groups as required. Secretariat support to the Working Group should be provided by the Chairing agency. Working Groups can either be standing or temporary, i.e. set up for a specific period of time or to produce a specific set of deliverables.
- **Networks** would be **informal groups**, established to **facilitate information sharing** on a specific area or issue. Networks would not have specific tasks/deliverables for the year and would not be required to report back to the RCM R-UNSDG. A Network Coordinator would be agreed on by the Regional Directors based on mandate and capacity as relevant to the focus of the Network. Membership would

be open to all UN entities on an opt-in basis. Regional partners may also be included as Network Coordinators or members of Networks as required.

The establishment and/or termination of Working Groups and Networks would be based on joint RCM R-UNSDG agreement. In addition, UN entities are encouraged to explore and identify additional areas of collaboration, either bi-laterally or multi-laterally, outside of the focus of the established Working Groups and Networks. Such joint initiatives can be shared with the RCM R-UNSDG, either for consultation or information sharing, and can be included as an agenda item for RCM R-UNSDG meetings, where relevant.

Suggested Structure for Consideration

Based on the above, a suggested structure for consideration and discussion is as follows:

Summary of the suggested changes:

- The SDG Country Support Taskforce becomes a Working Group. Note: This could also potentially be merged with the UNDAF Peer Support Group since the scope of work is related and the membership is very similar
- The SDG Data Taskforce becomes a Working Group
- The AFSD Taskforce becomes a Working Group
- The ARSD Taskforce becomes a Working Group
- PVE becomes a Network, rather than a Working Group
- Water becomes a Network, rather than a Working Group