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## Consultative Meeting on the Implementation Framework for the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda in the Arab Region

Cairo, Egypt, 18-20 September 2017

### Information Note

#### 1- Background

Cooperation between ESCWA, UN Environment, and the League of Arab States has led to the development of a draft “Implementation Framework for the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda”. The draft framework proposes means of integrating the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into national development plans and policies in the Arab region. The framework should be feasible to implement under the existing national statistical systems, within available and to be developed required data for analysis, monitoring and reporting in the region, which supports informed and integrated policy-making in the Arab region.

The framework’s methodology had already been presented and discussed earlier this year, during the “Preparatory Meeting for the 2017 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development” that was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2017 in Cairo, Egypt. That preparatory meeting was jointly organized by ESCWA, the League of Arab States, and UN Environment, and was attended by member country representatives to the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR), in addition to representatives of Arab, regional and international organizations, civil society representatives, and sustainable development experts.

Commissioning the development of this framework, and organization of the above-mentioned preparatory meeting both stemmed from the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE)’s resolutions during its 28<sup>th</sup> regular session which stated the following:

- *“calls on the Technical Secretariat of CAMRE, in cooperation and coordination with ESCWA and UN Environment /Regional Office for West Asia to prepare an implementation plan for the environmental dimension of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.” (Res 495, para. 3)*
- *“calls on the Technical Secretariat of CAMRE, in cooperation and coordination with ESCWA and UN Environment Regional Office for West Asia to hold a preparatory meeting on the regional environmental issues and priorities present on the agenda of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development (AFSD) in 2017.” (Res 495, para. 8)*

A set of key messages have resulted from the preparatory meeting, and were subsequently submitted as the contribution of CAMRE, AMWC<sup>1</sup>, CAMMAC<sup>2</sup>, & AMCHAC<sup>3</sup> to the 2017 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development (AFSD), held from 3 to 5 May 2017 in Rabat, Morocco, which in turn submitted its

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<sup>1</sup> Arab Ministerial Water Council.

<sup>2</sup> Council of Arab Ministers for Meteorology and Climate

<sup>3</sup> Arab Ministerial Council for Housing and Construction

recommendations to the 2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), held from 10 to 19 July in New York.

In addition, ESCWA, LAS, UN Environment and CEDARE, have been coordinating the work between official statistics and environment policies for more than a decade, working on data sources and methodologies for a common core set of Arab Sustainable Development indicators. A working group has been established to follow-up on these issues. (*Arab Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators-AWSDI*) by Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment - CAMRE during its 20<sup>th</sup> Session in 2008. The AWSDI proposed a core set of SDG environment related indicators during its last meeting held in Amman in March 2017, to be further discussed for implementation.

The above implemented work falls within ESCWA's role and priorities in supporting its member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) This includes supporting member States to incorporate the SDGs into their national development plans, assisting countries to develop their statistical systems, and undertaking regional follow-up processes such as the AFSD and regional monitoring and reporting of progress. This support is provided through three core areas of work: building regional consensus, research and analysis, and technical cooperation, and is tailored according to regional specificities and responds to current and projected priority environmental concerns.

This work also falls within UN Environment's core mandate as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system. This is translated at regional and national level to focused technical and policy guidance across the 2030 Agenda to integrate the environmental dimension and to effectively monitor this through supporting member states technically in the development and use of environmentally-related indicators, especially those for which UN Environment is lead agency.

This work also aligns with the *Doha Declaration on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda*, which was adopted at the 29<sup>th</sup> UNESCWA Ministerial Session in 2016. In the declaration, Arab governments emphasized the need for UNESCWA and UN organizations to support member States in their efforts towards achieving the SDGs, including the environmentally-related SDGs. This included a request for UNESCWA to develop approaches that adapt and incorporate the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and targets at both the regional and national levels as well as for identifying sets of interlinked goals drawn from national priorities. Arab countries also requested UNESCWA to continue to develop analysis tools that assist in determining interlinkages between goals, and to identify a narrow set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs. The implementation framework including the assessment of the regional environmental priorities also aim to address these priority areas.

## 2- Objectives and themes of the meeting

This meeting aims to review the "Implementation Framework for the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda". The meeting will highlight the approach adopted for the development of the framework and the assessment of the environmental priorities across the SDGs in the Arab region, and the assessment of the integration of the environmental dimension of the SDGs into regional and national development framework in the Arab region.

The meeting will have the following specific objectives:

- Exchange perspectives and priorities on implementing the 2030 agenda in general, and the environmental dimension of the Agenda and sustaining the natural resources base in particular through mainstreaming the SDGs into existing strategies and plans in the Arab region at both the regional and national levels;

- Review the “Implementation Framework for the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda”, being prepared by ESCWA, UN Environment and the League of Arab States;
- Engage participants in a dialogue on the proposed future steps, and the adequate regional and national institutional frameworks, to monitor and review the goals and targets that have an environmental and natural resources dimension.
- Exchange perspectives and views on how best to define, measure and monitor sustainable development goal indicators in environmental statistics areas for the Arab region in line with the 2030 Agenda, which is the objective of the environment pillar of the UN Development Account programme on data and statistics.

The meeting will result in a report that includes a set of conclusions and recommendations reflecting the participants’ views on the issues under consideration.

### 3- Participants

Member country representatives to the JCEDAR will be invited to the meeting, in addition to concerned regional institutions members of JCEDAR, and relevant experts in the field. Representatives from national statistical offices including the statistical focal points of the AWSDI and the members and the UN Development Account programme on data and statistics for the SDGs) will also be invited.

Participants necessitating sponsorship are kindly requested to submit a fully completed registration form to ESCWA and UNEP before 23 August 2017, to allow enough time for logistical arrangements.

### 4- Logistical issues

*Date and venue:* The meeting will be held in Cairo, Egypt from 18 to 20 September 2017, and the exact venue will be communicated to you later.

*Languages:* Arabic and English are the official languages of the Meeting. Simultaneous interpretation between both languages will be provided.

*Travel:* ESCWA and UN Environment will issue the tickets for their sponsored participants. Participants attending the meeting at their own expense need to make their own travel arrangements.

*Visas:* Participants are to make their own arrangements for obtaining entry visas to Egypt.

*Accommodation:* Participants are asked to make their own hotel arrangements, and more details on that will be provided shortly.

## 5- Correspondence

All correspondence related to the meeting must be directed to the following addresses:

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