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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

EGM on: Tracking progress toward the implementation of energy related SDGs in the Arab region, UN House, Riad Al Solh- Beirut, 24-25 January 2017.

Information Note

Within the context of its work on sustainable energy the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA) is organizing an Expert Group meeting (EGM) on “Tracking progress toward the implementation of energy related SDGs in the Arab region” to be held on 24-25 January, 2017, in Beirut, Lebanon.

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires countries to pursue concerted and accelerated action on sustainable energy in their national programmes in order to reconcile the growing need for energy services with mitigating the impacts of energy resource development and use. This situation calls for profound and immediate changes in how energy is produced and consumed.

The Arab region is facing an unprecedented threat caused by its unsustainable trend of energy consumption/dependency, affecting human development, the ecosystem and sustainable energy production. Furthermore, with major uncertainties in the world energy market, geopolitical climate, and recovering global economy, it is ever more important for the Arab countries to build a sustainable energy system which would involve a substantial transition from what is in place today by aligning the sustainable development agenda with their national priorities, capabilities, and circumstances. Thus, transitioning to a sustainable energy system is an opportunity to improve energy efficiency from source to use and minimize environmental impacts.

In this context, it is worth to mention one of the existing Data reporting mechanism “The Global Tracking Framework (GTF)” that measures how the world is progressing toward SE4All, tracking country-level indicators for energy access, renewable energy and energy efficiency. The Report developed based on the indicators defined based on the SE4All initiative and regularly updated by the World Bank, SE4ALL in coordination with the IEA, UNSD and other partner agencies. The second GTF (2015) provided an update on how fast the world moved toward sustainable energy goals between 2010 and 2012. The report assessed whether the world is moving fast enough to achieve those goals by 2030 and showed that, while the world is moving in the right direction, it will be necessary to accelerate efforts to reach sustainable energy goals by 2030. The GTF 2017 is involving for the first time the UN regional Commissions to develop a Regional profile on tracking progress toward in terms of energy access (EA), doubling the share of renewable energy (RE) and increasing the role of Energy efficiency (EE). This would allow having a much more elaborated Regional Report with breakdown at country level to support the analysis on the energy horizon 2030 for the Arab region. Therefore, it will be particularly important to bring the process and the findings of the GTF

closer to national level energy policy makers and statisticians. The collected inputs at the EGM will be integrated in the GTF-Arab regional profile and on an ongoing UNESCWA publication “Arab Sustainable Energy Horizon 2030” that seeks to explore different scenarios on how countries can attain sustainable energy in 2030.

II. SCOPE

This EGM falls under the strategic framework of UNESCWA on strengthening the capacity of Governments of the Member States on mainstreaming the energy-related SDGs and Paris Agreement into their national development plans and help them demonstrate progress, develop, implement, and monitor fact-based sustainable energy action plans. The EGM shall provide inputs to inform the energy data discussions to support the review of the Arab Regional profile as integrated part of the GTF2017 report.

The GTF measures how the world is progressing towards SE4All, tracking country-level indicators for EA, RE and EE. The SE4All has three interlinked objectives to be achieved by 2030:

- Ensure universal access to modern energy services.
- Double the global rate of improvement in EE.
- Double the share of RE in the global energy mix.

The five UN Regional Commissions held various joint meetings to customize and normalize the analysis and report. Those efforts should achieve the main following goals:

- Highlight differences among countries and regions in terms of progress towards SE4ALL and SDG7.
- Provide the opportunity to interpret the drivers behind specific country performances.
- Emphasize the weaknesses of countries to collect and investigate data.
- Standardize the structure and format of data presentation among the UN Regional Commissions

The regional customization of the GTF 2017 will take place through two parallel tracks.

- Short and standardized Regional Profiles that will appear in the global report GTF
- Regional Reports that will include the Regional Profile, other complementary material with a main focus on the region-specific customization.

This EGM will also explore how governments interpret key elements of sustainable energy and potential action forward and share their view and approach towards a sustainable energy future. The inputs of the EGM will support the development of the UNESCWA publication “Arab Sustainable Energy Horizon”.

III. OBJECTIVES AND TOPICS OF THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP

The objectives of this EGM are to focus on each country and sub-region and:

- Understand national statistical capabilities and perspectives on energy data collection challenges
- Harmonization of methodologies for measuring SDGs and indicators related to energy resources
- Identify differences and similarities between countries’ approaches and understandings of sustainable energy today and in the future
- Identify key milestones, major uncertainties and risks in the Arab countries and sub-regions for achieving sustainable energy future in 2030 and beyond.
- Collection of ideas for policies to support achievement of sustainable energy in 2030 and beyond.

- Increase alignment of member States' national plans with the energy Sustainable Development Goals

IV. FOCUS AREAS

The EGM will run through the energy indicators related to the main pillars, explain the methodology and identify the discrepancies in data and their difference with what the regional countries have been adapting. Furthermore, the members will not have the opportunity to amend or change the data, but their inputs will highlight the positions and circumstances that led to the discrepancies between the GTF and other sources and will benefit from this opportunity to correct the update the data to be submitted to the UNSD.

The EGM will also focus on defining the predetermined elements, the major uncertainties and key challenges that face the Arab countries sustainable energy future, and by putting as objectives, the energy related sustainable development goals, at the Arab regional level and the country level. The focus areas of the EGM include the following:

- Review and discuss the primary indicators and key data that will be included in the regional profile
- Identify trends in the data or important regional/country context to be included in regional profile and explore further in regional report
- Identify any areas that might be sensitive or problematic and need further review
- Demonstrate how GTF indicators will evolve and can be useful to policymakers/statistical agencies
- Identify existing national/regional data that can be featured in the regional reports to complement/explain the GTF indicators.
- Discuss the gaps between policies in place today and the targets set for a sustainable energy future?
- Debate the role of energy efficiency, low-carbon technologies (renewable energy, nuclear, others), and fossil fuels in future energy mixes
- Discuss the nexus between energy and other areas such as water, food, climate, economic growth, and how to link crosscutting concerns in policy design
- Discourse how can uncertainty about the future energy system be reflected in policymaking, such as in the formulation of adaptive policy pathways
- Brainstorm on the policy options may be chosen to enter a sustainable energy pathway.

V. PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the EGM will include the members of Energy Committee and the Focal points in energy statistics of the UN-ESCWA as well representatives of the International Energy Agency (IEA), the World Bank (WB) and UN Regional Commission of Africa (ECA).

VI. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

The EGM will be held at the UN-House in Beirut, Lebanon on 24-25 January 2017. Participants are kindly requested to arrive at the building at 8:30am on 24 January 2017 to secure their identification cards and access to the building.

The EGM materials will be presented in English and Arabic languages.

VII. LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

Each participant shall undertake the following preparation related to her/his participation: Securing hotel reservation in the venue location, visa, and any other requirements for travelling to Beirut, Lebanon.

Any update Information will be provided to participants in due course.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence related to the EGM is to be sent to either of the below addresses:

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