



The Regional Coordination Mechanism – Arab States

Meeting of the Working Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
WHO-EMRO Offices, Cairo - 25 September 2016

1. Background

The 21st meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), held in Cairo on 24 and 25 November 2015, called for the establishment of an inter-agency Working Group (WG) on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose members will be the directors of regional United Nations offices. According to its Terms of Reference, the WG is chaired by ESCWA and aims to:

“Support coordination efforts of regional UN actors and the League of Arab States in their efforts to adapt, implement, monitor and report on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will seek to harness the collective strength of all the agencies to undertake joint research, consensus building, capacity building, advocacy and knowledge exchange, follow up and review and monitoring of progress on the new global agenda. It will promote an integrated approach in all its activities, in line with the spirit of the new agenda.”

The Terms of Reference further define two main deliverables of the WG: The Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, and The Arab Sustainable Development Report.

In May 2016, members of the WG attending the 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development in Amman, Jordan held in a side meeting to discuss priorities and future plans. The members agreed to hold a working level meeting of the WG in September 2016. WHO-EMRO offered to host the meeting at their Cairo offices.

2. The Meeting Objective and Focus Areas

A. Meeting Objective

The key objective of this first full-day meeting of the WG on the 2030 Agenda is to take stock of the collective efforts of the different agencies, one year after the launch of the 2030 Agenda, and identify areas for mutual cooperation.

B. Focus Areas

As per the draft tentative Agenda, attached as Annex A, the WG meeting will have three focus areas, as follows:

1. Mapping Efforts of WG Members

In order to effectively coordinate regional agency efforts on the 2030 Agenda and propose areas for collaboration, the first step is to undertake a mapping of activities planned by UN agencies at the regional level in 2016-2017. As input to the WG meeting, ESCWA has circulated **a brief questionnaire** to all members of the WG in an effort to identify areas for potential collaboration and cooperation, as well as gaps for further attention. Focal points of the WG have been asked to submit their responses to ESCWA by 5 September 2016.

A synthesis report summarizing the key priorities and activities of the members will be prepared by ESCWA, presented and discussed at the WG meeting.

2. Applying an Cross-Sectoral, Cross-Agency Approach to the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda is often referred to as an “integrated agenda” and an “indivisible whole” in recognition that the economic, social, environmental and also governance pillars of sustainable development are interconnected and cut across the entire framework.

Members of the RCM represent different perspectives, and many work to support member States in specific sectors such as health, education, childhood, women’s empowerment, labour, industry, environment, etc. The WG offers an opportunity to bring together a **multidisciplinary team of development experts** to better understand the linkages between different goals and targets, and arrive at a more meaningful assessment of policy entry points.

It is proposed to have a focused discussion from the perspectives of health to explore and unpack the challenges and opportunities facing the Working Group to demonstrate options for policy and joint action between RCM members and across sectors and programs reflecting the linkages and interconnectedness among the pillars and between the 17 goals. SDG Goal 3 known as the specific health goal with its 13 targets will require joint action, active collaboration with a multitude of stakeholders, most of them outside the Health sector. There are also a several health related goals among the remaining 16 SDGs, which should also be addressed, and monitored some influencing health directly and others impacting positively or negatively.

The RCM also allows regional UN entities to collaborate on **trans boundary and cross border issues** that affect the achievement of the goals.

3. Identifying Future Priorities

The third and final focus area of the WG meeting will be the identification of **future priorities for joint work**, through the articulation of a draft Action Plan. The Plan will include modalities for cooperation in the planning of regional meetings, upcoming research, capacity building efforts and advocacy. The future plans of the WG will be informed by both the global agenda of the High Level Political Forum, and the regional agenda set by member States in the different inter-governmental fora.

3. Organizational Matters

A. Participants

Members of the WG on the 2030 Agenda at the level of Director, and/or Agency focal points are encouraged to attend the meeting. Each Agency is responsible for covering the cost of their participation.

B. Venue and Time

The meeting will be held on Sunday 25 September at the offices of the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean in Nasr City, Cairo, Egypt. The meeting is scheduled from 9:30 – 16:30.

A more detailed logistics note will be sent in August.

C. Confirmation

Agencies who wish to participate in the WG meeting are kindly requested to confirm in writing to Ms. Ramla Khalidi, khalidir@un.org with a copy to Mr. Razi Awada awada4@un.org and Dr. Rayana Bou Haka, bouhakar@who.int

Annex A: Tentative Agenda for the RCM WG on 2030 Agenda Meeting

25 September 2016 - WHO-EMRO Offices, Cairo

Time	Topic
9:30 – 10:00	Opening, Objectives and Tour de Table Meeting Co-Chairs: ESCWA & WHO
10:00 – 11:30	Session 1: Chair: <i>TBD</i> Update on region specific conclusions of the 2016 HLPF & Synthesis Report of the Regional Mapping of Activities 20 min. presentation by ESCWA, followed by discussion and validation of the key findings
11:30 – 12:00	Break
12:00 – 13:30	Session 2: SDG Integration – Exploring the Indivisible Nature of the Goals Chair: <i>TBD</i> 10 min. presentation on ESCWA’s Cluster Approach 10 min. presentation by WHO on linkages with Goal 3 Other interventions (<i>TBD</i>) followed by discussion
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:30	Session 3: Elements of a Future Action Plan Chair: ESCWA Based on outcomes of Sessions 1 and 2 identify the key elements and activities to be carried out by the WG in 2016-2017.