Terms of Reference for the SDG Data Taskforce (SDG Data TF), one of four taskforces which report directly to the Working Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Purpose: The SDG Data TF aims to coordinate and harmonize data generated by all parties reporting on SDGs and other relevant internationally endorsed frameworks.

Objective: The TF has the following objectives:

- Develop a regional indicator database;
- Select indicators that will inform regional studies and reports and promote evidence-based policy making in the context of the 2030 Agenda;
- Propose regional and sub-regional monitoring and accountability mechanisms;
- Ensure full cooperation and coordination with other Data entities at national and regional levels.

Scope and Function: The role of the SDG Data TF is to bring coordinated support to the 2030 WG and the related taskforces, most notably the TF on the Arab Sustainable Development Report (ASDR). Specific functions and scope of work of the TF include:

i. **Regional framework of SDG indicators and other relevant internationally endorsed frameworks:** Taking the Global SDG Indicators Framework as a starting point, the SDG Data TF will consider the relevance of indicators to regional priorities, availability of data, and their importance for regional studies and reports. Primarily, the indicators should be based on national official statistics, further harmonized and aggregated as appropriate by the responsible RCM member agencies. However, some of the indicators (most typically indicators related to climate change, sea/ocean water, indicators on means of implementation, etc.) shall be produced directly by the agencies. The underlying principle is to come up with indicators for which data can be collected soonest.

ii. **Sources and means of data collection:** Following up to the decisions by the 47th session of the UN Statistical Commission, the compilation of the indicators will be based to the extent possible on comparable and standardized national official statistics provided by the countries to the international statistical systems. However, in the interest of comparability of data and ensuring that these are produced according to standardized methodologies, the TF should precisely define specific surveys from which data shall be drawn, and data processing methods. Furthermore, in the interest of coordination and harmonization of data, responsibilities of individual agencies in data collection shall be specified.

iii. **Sharing of data:** The SDG Data TF will agree on means of sharing data, i.e. ensuring that all relevant data are made available to all agencies, regardless which agency is the original custodian. A regional SDG indicators database will be the central point for data sharing.

iv. **Liaison with the intergovernmental processes:** The SDG Data TF shall, through its Secretariat (ESCWA Statistics Division) liaise with the Steering Committee of National Statistical Offices on SDG Indicators (SC-SDG) to be established by the ESCWA Statistical Committee. This should extend to the representatives of the Arab States in global groups, namely the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG) and the High Level Group on Partnership and Capacity Development (HLG). The inter-agency and the inter-governmental processes have distinct constituencies, however, it is important that ultimately there is consensus on indicators and modalities of collection and harmonization of data throughout the regional statistical system.

Membership and Organization: Co-chaired by ESCWA and UNFPA, membership is restricted to statisticians in RCM entities or staff who work directly in the collection and production of SDG data. The TF may invite observers from the regional statistical agencies who are not members of the RCM. The TF will meet at least once a year physically and above that as required to discuss progress against the workplan as well as other global, regional and national developments related to the 2030 Agenda. These meetings may be organized on the sidelines of other (regional) meetings. In addition, there will be remote ongoing dialogue/discussion within the group through the exchange of information, sharing of tools, review of strategies etc. The Co-Chairs of the TF are responsible for calling meetings, leading on the development of the workplan and assigning tasks to deliver on the milestones as determined in the workplan.