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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Committee on Water Resources  
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Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017  
in the field of water resources****Summary**

The proposed programme of work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the biennium 2016-2017 in the field of water resources presents a set of activities and outputs related to the implementation of the expected accomplishments envisaged under subprogramme 1, “Integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development”, of the ESCWA strategic framework. While subprogramme 1 comprises work in the fields of energy, water resources, food and environment and is implemented by the Sustainable Development Policies Division (SDPD) at ESCWA, this document contains the proposed activities in the field of water resources only, which are implemented by the Water Resources Section of SDPD.

The Committee on Water Resources is invited to review the activities listed in the proposed programme of work and discuss the extent to which they meet the priorities of ESCWA member States and their relevance to the expected accomplishments in the field of water resources. The Committee is also invited to discuss ways to concretely measure the indicators of achievement in order to accurately monitor progress achieved as a result of implementing the proposed outputs.

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## **Introduction**

1. The activities comprised in the proposed programme of work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the biennium 2016-2017 in the field of water resources were formulated on the basis of subprogramme 1, “Integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development”, of the strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017, which was adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-eight session (Tunis, 15-18 September 2014).

2. The Sustainable Development Policies Division (SDPD) at ESCWA is responsible for the implementation of subprogramme 1 through its three sections, the Water Resources Section, the Energy Section and the Food and Environment Policies Section. During the biennium 2016-2017, SDPD will maintain its focus on promoting regional and subregional cooperation on sustainable development in the fields of water resources, energy, food and environment, and on assisting member States in the harmonization of relevant policies and standards. This document presents the proposed outputs to be implemented by the Water Resources Section.

3. In preparing those outputs, the secretariat has given due consideration to the following:

(a) Major challenges facing the Arab region, including issues that have emerged during the implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 and in 2014;

(b) Progress achieved by member States in the implementation of the global policy on sustainable development, including the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation which was adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 26 August-4 September 2002); Agenda 21, which was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992); and the outcome document entitled “The future we want”, which was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) (Rio de Janeiro, 20-22 June 2012);

(c) The Arab Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change, which was adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) at its nineteenth session (Cairo, 5-6 December 2007) and in which the ministers affirmed the determination of their Governments to adopt national and regional action plans on climate change issues, with a view to assessing possible impacts and developing mitigation and adaptation programmes, as well as their determination to include climate change policies in all sectors within national and regional policies for sustainable development. The Executive Office of CAMRE echoed this determination at its extraordinary meeting (Cairo, 16 March 2010) by committing to continue the work on the implementation of the Arab Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change;

(d) General Assembly resolutions 64/292 of 3 August 2010 entitled “The human right to water and sanitation”, which recognizes the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right; and 67/203 of 21 December 2012 entitled “Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development”; in addition to ESCWA resolution 305 (XXVII) entitled “Sustainable development in the region and follow-up and implementation of the decisions of the Rio+20 Conference,” which was adopted by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session (Beirut, 7-10 May 2012).

## **I. ACTION REQUIRED OF THE COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES**

4. The Committee on Water Resources is invited to review the proposed outputs and provide its guidance to the secretariat on the basis of the following two criteria: (a) the extent to which the proposed outputs respond to the needs of intended beneficiaries, namely ministries and authorities of the Arab region in charge of water resource issues; and (b) the extent to which those outputs contribute to the realization of the expected accomplishments of subprogramme 1, considering the outcome of the deliberations that will take place at the current session.

## II. SUBPROGRAMME 1: INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### A. OBJECTIVE OF SUBPROGRAMME 1 FOR THE BIENNIUM 2016-2017

5. The objective of subprogramme 1 is to achieve the integrated management of natural resources leading to improved food, water and energy security and enhanced resilience to climate change, and to mainstream sustainable development goals into regional and national policy processes.

### B. EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
<p>(a) Member States mainstream appropriate goals related to sustainable development into national multisectoral strategies and action plans for the integrated management of natural resources, including tools for measuring, monitoring and reporting</p> <p><i>Strategic pillar:</i> inclusive development</p> <p><i>Priority area:</i> sustainable natural resources</p>	<p>(a) (i) Number of multisectoral institutional mechanisms established to follow up on goals related to sustainable development</p> <p>(ii) Number of harmonized methodologies for measuring sustainable development targets and indicators adopted at the sector level in member States</p> <p>(iii) Number of strategies, plans and policies adopted by line ministries to support the integrated management of natural resources</p>
<p>(b) Member States adopt platforms and resolutions on regional cooperation on shared water resources, energy networks and environmental sustainability to improve food, water and energy security</p> <p><i>Strategic pillar:</i> regional integration</p> <p><i>Priority area:</i> agreements and strategies</p>	<p>(b) (i) Number of regional or subregional platforms developed to improve cooperation on food, water and energy</p> <p>(ii) Number of intergovernmental recommendations adopted to enhance regional cooperation on environmental sustainability</p> <p>(iii) Number of harmonized tools, techniques and guidelines implemented by member States for food, water and energy security</p>
<p>(c) Member States develop coordinated policies, strategies and frameworks for climate change mitigation and adaptation and for disaster risk reduction to enhance resilience and respond to the impact of natural and human-induced disasters</p> <p><i>Strategic pillar:</i> good governance and resilience</p> <p><i>Priority area:</i> resilience to crises and occupation</p>	<p>(c) Number of recommendations, resolutions and decrees adopted by member States that aim to coordinate responses to climate change and measures for climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction</p>

## C. STRATEGY

19.32 The Sustainable Development Policies Division is responsible for the implementation of subprogramme 1. The interrelated and complex challenges and current social and political tensions in the region have created a sense of urgency for concerted efforts to strengthen interlinkages between the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. Regional challenges include rise in demand for food, water and energy leading to unsustainable use of resources and food insecurity; unsustainable production and consumption patterns; inefficient energy use in key productive and consuming sectors; as well as climate change and its impact on natural resources.

19.33 ESCWA will support member States to move towards a more sustainable development path by implementing and following up on the outcomes of major United Nations summits; strengthening capacities to formulate and implement policies, strategies and plans; advocating the integration of policies on water, energy and food; facilitating regional cooperation and coordination for greater food, water and energy security; and developing mechanisms for coordinated responses to climate change and other natural crises.

19.34 In implementing subprogramme 1, ESCWA will:

(a) Advocate for and raise awareness of regional and global commitments, particularly the sustainable development-related goals, the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, and the Arab strategies and action plans for the integrated management of resources, climate change mitigation and disaster risk reduction;

(b) Serve as a forum for promoting multisectoral policy dialogue on sustainable development issues and priorities towards forging regional positions and perspectives based on the exchange of information, lessons learned and good practice;

(c) Support member States in their efforts to improve the efficient use of natural resources by analyzing performance in these sectors, providing policy recommendations, promoting the application of appropriate green technologies and encouraging the integrated management of resources;

(d) Facilitate regional cooperation and coordination as a means to enhance food, water and energy security and alleviate poverty in rural areas;

(e) Support the development of national or regional mechanisms, networks or help desks for the integration of the different pillars of sustainable development;

(f) Foster regional approaches on climate change adaptation and mitigation by supporting the development of mechanisms to deal with climate change impacts, conduct impact and vulnerability assessments, and examine associated socioeconomic and environmental issues in order to inform policymaking processes and support member States in their negotiations.

19.35 This will be achieved through servicing intergovernmental bodies; conducting high-quality policy-oriented research and analytical work on the science-policy interface; organizing high-level and expert group meetings; providing advisory services; implementing field projects; supporting dedicated knowledge platforms for professionals; and issuing technical materials to enhance the capacity to address sustainable development issues and challenges.

19.36 Work under the subprogramme will strive to maximize synergies through collaboration with different United Nations agencies, regional commissions and organizations, and participation in the United Nations inter-agency coordination mechanisms on water resources and energy, the United Nations High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Regional Coordination Mechanism.

#### D. EXTERNAL FACTORS

6. Subprogramme 1 will achieve its objective and expected accomplishments provided that: (a) member States remain committed to giving due priority to sustainable development issues and to adopting appropriate measures for enhancing food, energy and water security; (b) political stability is improved leading to institution building and enhanced governance and transparency; (c) line ministries in member States work together on key strategic issues and cooperate in an institutional process; (d) member States are willing to establish mechanisms/platforms at interregional and interministerial levels to cooperate on sustainable development issues and incorporate the sustainable development goals currently being negotiated at global, regional and national forums; and (e) no significant shortfalls occur in funding resources.

#### E. OUTPUTS

7. SDPD, which comprises the Water Resources Section, the Energy Section and the Food and Environment Policies Section, is responsible for implementing the expected accomplishments under subprogramme 1. This document, however, only presents the activities and outputs falling under the responsibility of the Water Resources Section during the biennium 2016-2017.

(a) *Servicing intergovernmental and expert bodies*

(i) *Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (twenty-ninth session)*

Parliamentary documentation:

Report of the Committee on Water Resources on its eleventh session.

(ii) *Committee on Water Resources*

- a. Servicing the meetings of the twelfth session of the Committee on Water Resources;
- b. Parliamentary documentation:
  - i. Regional cooperation for climate change adaptation in the Arab region;
  - ii. Arab cooperation on shared water resources;
  - iii. Energy-water nexus in the Arab region;

(iii) *Ad hoc expert group meetings*

- a. Intergovernmental consultative meetings in preparation for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (2016 and 2017);
- b. Methodologies for meeting sustainable development goals related to the water sector at national, regional and global levels;
- c. Coordinating responses to climate change and disaster risk reduction in the Arab region;
- d. Improved shared water resources management within the framework of global, regional and basin-level agreements;

(iv) *Assistance to intergovernmental bodies and/or United Nations representatives/rapporteurs under their established mandates*

- a. Substantive support to the Arab Ministerial Water Council (2016 and 2017);

- b. Support to the Executive Secretariat of the ESCWA-United Nations Environment Programme-League of Arab States Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR) and follow-up on resolutions taken by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (2016 and 2017);
- c. Support to the Arab Permanent Committee on Meteorology (2016 and 2017).

(b) *Other substantive activities (regular budget)*

(i) *Recurrent publication*

ESCWA Water Development Report No. 7: Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction in the Arab Region (2017);

(ii) *Non-recurrent publication*

Shared Water: Horizon 2030;

(iii) *Other printed material*

- a. Promotional material for World Water Day (2016 and 2017);
- b. Arab Regional Climate Change Knowledge Hub (ARCC);
- c. Climate change assessment for adaptation in the Arab region;

(iv) *Technical material*

- a. Methodology for measuring sustainable development targets and indicators related to water;
- b. Assessing climate change challenges in the Arab region;

(v) *Substantive servicing of inter-agency meetings*

- a. High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (2016 and 2017);
- b. Arab Water Forum (2016 and 2017);
- c. Stockholm World Water Week (2016 and 2017);
- d. Regional and global forums on energy, water and food (2016 and 2017);
- e. United Nations coordination bodies on energy, water and environment (2016 and 2017);
- f. Regional Coordination Mechanism meetings (2016 and 2017);
- g. Support to Arab States in preparation for the Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP) (2016 and 2017).

(c) *Technical cooperation (extrabudgetary)*

*Field projects*

- a. Developing the capacity of ESCWA member States to address the water-energy nexus for achieving sustainable development goals (Development Account (DA) ninth tranche);
- b. Building the capacity of Arab countries for climate change adaptation through integrated water resource management (DA eighth tranche);

- c. Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR);
- d. Promoting food and water security through cooperation and capacity development in the Arab region;
- e. Establishing a Regional Mechanism for Improved Monitoring and Reporting on Access to Water Supply and Sanitation Services in the Arab Region (MDG+ Initiative);
- f. Support to the Arab Integrated Water Resources Management Network (AWARENET);
- g. Adaptation to climate change in the water sector in the Middle East and North Africa region.



Annex**LEGISLATIVE MANDATES***General Assembly resolutions*

64/292	The human right to water and sanitation
65/160	Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa
67/11	Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States
67/174	The right to food
67/203	Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
67/209	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
67/215	Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy
67/228	Agriculture development and food security
67/231	International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development
67/263	Reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable development and international cooperation
67/290	Format and organizational aspects of the high level political forum on sustainable development
67/291	Sanitation for All
68/6	Outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals

*Economic and Social Council resolutions*

2009/28	The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration on the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development adopted at the high-level segment of the 2008 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 2008
2011/5	The role of the United Nations system in implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women
2013/22	Human settlements

*ESCWA resolutions*

281 (XXV)	Addressing climate change issues in the Arab region
305 (XXVII)	Sustainable development in the region and follow-up and implementation of the decisions of the Rio+20 Conference

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