

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

Committee on Water Resources
Twelfth session
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Item 7 (a) of the provisional agenda

**Actions taken in the field of water resources since the eleventh session
of the Committee on Water Resources****Implementation of recommendations made by the Committee
at its eleventh session****Summary**

The Committee on Water Resources was established pursuant to resolution 205 (XVIII) adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) on 25 May 1995 and endorsed by Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/26 of 24 July 1995, in recognition of the vital role played by the water resources sector in the economic and social development of Arab countries. The Committee helps in setting priorities for the ESCWA programme of work in the field of water resources; supporting member States in implementing recommendations made at regional and international conferences; and fostering intraregional cooperation.

The Committee convenes its sessions biannually. It held its eleventh session in Amman from 26 to 27 March 2015, and made recommendations addressed to member States and to the ESCWA secretariat. The Water Resources Section of the ESCWA Sustainable Development Policies Division is responsible for carrying out work in that field. The present document sets out actions and activities undertaken by the Section pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee on Water Resources at its eleventh session.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCWaM	Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region
ACSAD	Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands
ACWUA	Arab Countries Water Utilities Association
AMWC	Arab Ministerial Water Council
APCM	Arab Permanent Committee on Meteorology
COP	Conference of the Parties
CORDEX	Coordinating Regional Downscaling Climate Experiment
FAO-RNE	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)
IAEG-SDGs	Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
RICCAR	Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socioeconomic Vulnerability in the Arab Region
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNDA	United Nations Development Account
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO/CEHA	World Health Organization Centre for Environmental Health Action
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

**RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES
AT ITS ELEVENTH SESSION AND MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THEM**

1. At its eleventh session, held in Amman on 26 and 27 March 2015, the Committee on Water Resources issued recommendations addressed to the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and others addressed to member States.¹ The present document reviews actions and activities undertaken by ESCWA to implement the recommendations pertaining to its work.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED
TO THE ESCWA SECRETARIAT**

Recommendation (a)

Continue to offer technical support and capacity-building services to those involved in the management of shared surface and ground water resources, including familiarizing them with related international conventions and their implications for the region.

Measures taken

2. In support of this recommendation and the request of the Arab Ministerial Water Council (AMWC) Technical Scientific Advisory Committee at its thirteenth session (Cairo, 24-26 January 2016), ESCWA contracted an international legal expert to provide a written opinion on the draft framework convention on shared water resources in the Arab region. The legal opinion was presented at the seventh intergovernmental consultative meeting on the draft convention for shared water resources in the Arab region (Cairo, 14-15 March 2016), which was organized by the League of Arab States and technically supported by ESCWA. The deliberations built upon the discussions held at the fifth consultative meetings (Cairo, 28-29 April 2015 and 23 May 2015) and the sixth consultative meeting (Cairo, 16-17 December 2015).

3. ESCWA also provided substantive and financial support to the Conference on Arab Water under Occupation (Cairo, 26-28 October 2016), organized by the League of Arab States in partnership with the Palestinian Water Authority. ESCWA also participated in the workshop led by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) on the theme “From practitioner to practitioner: training on how to use the two global water conventions to promote cooperation on the ground” (Geneva, 20-21 October 2016), and provided advice to selected ESCWA member States on these two conventions.

Recommendation (b)

Continue to implement RICCAR activities, especially those related to analysing regional climate and hydrological models, and provide stakeholders with the RICCAR results to support informed and effective national and regional policy formulation and decision-making.

Measures taken

4. ESCWA continues to implement the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socioeconomic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR) and RICCAR-related activities, such as issuing the “Training manual on the integrated vulnerability assessment methodology” (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/Manual.1) in collaboration with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) in the context of the project “Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region” (ACCWaM). The manual provides step-by-step guidance to understanding the various components of preparing a regional vulnerability assessment, drawing on outputs generated from regional climate models and regional

¹ The recommendations are included in the report on the eleventh session of the Committee on Water Resources (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/8/Report).

hydrological models through the use of geospatial and statistical tools and an integrated mapping approach. ESCWA has also issued a technical booklet on “Climate projections and extreme climate indices for the Arab region” (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/Booklet.2), summarizing the results of the regional climate modelling projections for temperature, precipitation and a set of region-specific extreme climate indices until 2100. The booklet is available in Arabic and English and was disseminated at the Twenty First Conference of the Parties (COP21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris and COP22 in Marrakesh. It has been used to inform Arab policymakers and negotiators. The findings are included in the “Climate change policy for a resilient water sector” issued by the Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation in February 2016. The Lebanese Ministry of Environment has also included RICCAR outputs in “Lebanon’s third national communication to UNFCCC” issued in November 2016.

5. In 2016, ESCWA completed the implementation of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project on the theme “Developing the capacities of the Arab countries for climate change adaptation by applying integrated water resources management (IWRM) tools”, which builds on the RICCAR climate change assessment results. Five modules on climate change adaptation were prepared and tested at five regional workshops in cooperation with the respective specialized project partner, namely the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) on agriculture (Beirut, 15-17 February 2016); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the environment (Beirut, 22-24 March 2016); the World Health Organization Centre for Environmental Health Action (WHO/CEHA) on health (Amman, 19-21 April 2016); the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA) on human settlements (Amman, 22-24 May 2016); and ESCWA leading the module on economic development (Amman, 25-27 May 2016). Each module draws upon relevant RICCAR outputs to contextualize the adaptation challenges and measures proposed in the associated modules. “The climate change adaptation manual using integrated water resources management (IWRM) tools” was finalized at these workshops.

6. The external evaluation of the UNDA project was completed on 30 November 2016 and found that “the UNDA project has brought to the forefront regionally specific, cutting-edge research on climate change, and has converted this material into user-friendly knowledge products... In particular, the project built substantially on ESCWA’s RICCAR initiative (2009-present) that examined the impact of climate change on freshwater resources in the Arab region and provided regionally specific data. The need for and the importance of this project was underlined by all stakeholders and participants, including representatives from participating Arab States and experts. The project was widely described as the first project to squarely tackle the impact of climate change on the Arab Region, as prior data and information had been global in nature.”

7. ESCWA is currently preparing two climate change publications based on RICCAR findings, for issuance in 2017. The “Arab climate change assessment report” will present the findings of the integrated assessment and associated case studies and technical work conducted within the framework of the RICCAR project. The seventh issue of the ESCWA Water Development Report 7 is subtitled “Climate change and disaster risk reduction in the Arab region”. It will draw upon RICCAR findings to discuss linkages between climate change and disaster risk reduction so as to formulate integrated policies on natural disasters, particularly water-related disasters such as droughts, floods and landslides that are being exacerbated by climate change. A RICCAR booklet on the Arab Regional Climate Change Knowledge Hub is also under preparation.

8. Work on RICCAR was shared and informed by a series of meetings and workshops organized by ESCWA in consultation with partners, namely the fourth RICCAR training workshop for water ministries and regional experts entitled “Regional workshop on moving from climate change impact assessment to socioeconomic vulnerability assessment in the Arab region” (Beirut, 8-10 June 2015) and the fourth meeting of the RICCAR Vulnerability Assessment Working Group (Beirut, 10 June 2015). Preparations for the Regional Knowledge Hub were formalized during a consultative meeting on the subject (Beirut, 19-20 April 2015). Technical peer reviews of the RICCAR integrated assessment methodology and findings were conducted at two expert group meetings (Beirut, 27-28 April 2016; and 5-9 December 2016). The reviewers vetted the findings and outputs of the regional climate modelling, hydrological modelling and vulnerability components of the integrated assessment.

9. Intergovernmental reporting on RICCAR findings and progress was also regularly presented to the AMWC Technical Scientific Advisory Committee (see recommendation (h)) and to meetings organized by the Arab Permanent Committee on Meteorology (APCM). This includes a subcommittee meeting on weather and climate hazard information management (Amman, 28-29 February 2016), the first Arab Forum on Meteorology and Climate (Abu Dhabi, 8-9 May 2016), the thirty-second APCM meeting (Abu Dhabi, 10-11 May 2016), and the first ministerial session of the Arab Council of Ministers Responsible for Meteorology and Climate (Abu Dhabi, 12-13 May 2016).

10. To promote the dissemination of and dialogue on RICCAR findings, ESCWA organized a seminar on the theme “Climate change impacts on water for development in the Arab region” with RICCAR partner institutions at World Water Week 2015 (Stockholm, 25 August 2015). The seminar highlighted how the science-policy interface has been institutionalized in the region to support climate change assessment, adaptation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development planning. ESCWA also raised awareness of RICCAR by providing a snapshot of regional challenges while serving as a panellist at a seminar organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Water Assessment Programme on the 2015 *World Water Development Report: Water for a Sustainable World*. ESCWA delivered presentations on RICCAR and its preliminary findings and on interagency and intergovernmental coordination mechanisms at several forums, including Coordinating Regional Downscaling Climate Experiment (CORDEX) 2016 (Stockholm, 17-20 May 2016); the second Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Specialized Conference for Weather Technologies (WeatherTech GCC) (Abu Dhabi, 1-2 November 2016); and the Workshop on the Role of Climate Information and Services in Support of Decision-Making in the Context of Climate Change (Casablanca, 4-6 October 2016), organized by the Direction de la Météorologie Nationale of Morocco with technical and financial support from ESCWA.

Recommendation (c)

Link RICCAR results to activities for enhancing the capacities of Arab negotiators on issues discussed during climate change negotiations, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, in preparation for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and follow up on the outcomes of the Conference.

Measures taken

11. ESCWA cooperated with the League of Arab States to prepare Arab negotiators for UNFCCC/COP21 and COP22 by organizing the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh regional training workshops on the theme “Capacity development for climate change negotiations for the Arab countries”. The fourth workshop (Doha, 19-21 May 2015) aimed to develop a comprehensive overview of the outcomes, implications and findings of COP20, and an understanding of the relevant factors contributing to successful negotiations on climate change. The fifth workshop was convened in cooperation with UNEP (Cairo, 17-19 November 2015) to build common positions between Arab countries, while taking into consideration the challenges and limits of such common positions in preparation for COP21. The sixth workshop was also held in cooperation with UNEP (Cairo, 3-6 April 2016), focusing on the means of implementation of the Paris Agreement in view of the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions submitted by the Arab Countries. The seventh workshop was held in cooperation with UNEP and the UNESCO/Cairo Office (Rabat, 25-29 September 2016), and highlighted issues related to finance and technology transfer to prepare Arab States for COP22.

12. ESCWA also partnered with the League of Arab States to organize two side events during COP21 and COP22. The first focused on the theme “Climate change and vulnerability assessment in the Arab region” (Paris, 4 December 2015) and provided insights into regional and national initiatives and national case studies on climate change impact and vulnerability assessment and on resistance towards the development of adaptation strategies in the Arab region. The second focused on the theme “Climate change impacts on the Arab region and adaptation and mitigation initiatives” (Marrakech, 15 November 2016), and discussed regional

initiatives and national efforts on climate change impacts, adaptation strategies and measures, and mitigation actions to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab region.

Recommendation (d)

Continue to implement the MDG+ Initiative; consult, coordinate and collaborate with partners; complete the first and second MDG+ annual reports; implement Arab Ministerial Water Council decisions; and update member State data.

Measures taken

13. In December 2016, ESCWA completed the implementation of the project funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) on “Establishing a regional mechanism for improved monitoring and reporting on access to water supply and sanitation services in the Arab region” that supported the MDG+ Initiative.² The project finalized the first and second MDG+ Initiative reports, which were issued in partnership with the League of Arab States and ACWUA under the auspices of AMWC. The *MDG+ Initiative First Report (2015)*³ was vetted during the second regional workshop on the MDG+ Initiative (Amman, 13-14 January 2015), which was convened on the sidelines of the Second Arab Water Week, cleared by the heads of the MDG+ Initiative national monitoring teams and endorsed by AMWC at its seventh session (Cairo, 27 May 2015). The preliminary findings of the draft *MDG+ Initiative Second Report (2016)* were discussed at the third regional workshop on the MDG+ Initiative (Amman, 18-19 November 2015), as a means to inform the MDG+ Initiative national focal points and team members of the new water-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) included in the 2030 Agenda. The second report was endorsed by AMWC at its eighth session (Cairo, 26 October 2016). The first report presents the vetted data submitted on the MDG+ indicators from 12 Arab countries. The second report broadened coverage to include datasets from 18 Arab countries. The findings collected from pilot consumer field surveys were also included in the reports.

14. Within the framework of the MDG+ Initiative project activities, ACWUA organized four national workshops to train national monitoring teams on the collection, calculation and validation of national datasets related to a set of regionally specific water and sanitation indicators (Rabat, 2-3 June 2015; Beirut, 6-8 August 2015; Nouakchott, 1-3 September 2015; and Khartoum, 8-14 September 2015). The training workshops were based on the training materials and an e-tool prepared by ESCWA (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/1/Manual).

15. ESCWA organized three regional meetings on fostering regional dialogue and recommended ways for Arab countries to move forward on the water-related SDGs. The Expert Group Meeting on the Water-related Sustainable Development Goals (Beirut, 12-13 April 2016) informed regional experts and stakeholders of possible next steps. The MDG+ Initiative: High Level Meeting on the Water-related Sustainable Development Goals (Amman, 1-2 November 2016) was attended by official representatives from Arab countries, including members of the MDG+ Initiative national monitoring teams from water-related ministries, water utilities and national statistical offices. Participants at the High Level Meeting examined lessons learned and proposed recommendations for regional and country level monitoring of the water-related SDGs. They also endorsed the resolution adopted by AMWC at its eighth session, providing that Arab countries should continue to submit data on the MDG+ indicators for a third report based on 2014 and 2015 datasets, as detailed in the associated meeting report (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2016/WG.21/Report).

16. Based on the recommendation of the High Level Meeting, ESCWA convened an expert consultation on the SDG6 indicators (Beirut, 21 December 2016), comprising representatives from countries serving on the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for

² The MDG+ Initiative is the short name of the Regional Initiative for Establishing a Regional Mechanism for Improved Monitoring and Reporting on Access to Water Supply and Sanitation Services in the Arab Region.

³ Available from www.acwua.org/mdg+/images/files/FINAL.pdf.

Sustainable Development. Participants reached consensus on at least three areas for collective action and follow-up for water-scarce countries, including those in the Arab region. Specifically, these include efforts to adopt targets and indicators related to water accessibility, water scarcity and treated wastewater reuse. ESCWA will report to AMWC at its subsequent session on the recommendations emanating from these regional meetings.

17. In view of the imminent closing of the MDG+ Initiative, AMWC, at its eighth ministerial session, thanked ESCWA and ACWUA for their efforts in preparing the first and second MDG+ Initiative reports, Sida for its continuous support, and focal points and national teams for their contribution to the collection of data needed for the preparation of both reports. The Ministerial Council also affirmed that it considered the initiative an achievement and an opportunity to initiate monitoring of SDGs implementation.

18. The external evaluation of the Sida-funded project supporting the MDG+ Initiative was completed on 23 December 2016. The evaluation concludes by stating that “the MDG+ Initiative offers a successful model of how regional and country-based monitoring mechanisms can complement and inform global monitoring frameworks. The initiative provides reliable information on access to water supply, sanitation and wastewater management services in Arab States based on a set of regional indicators, a common methodology and data collected and vetted by national monitoring teams comprised of ministries responsible for water and sanitation utilities and national statistical offices. The MDG+ Initiative has anchored two key learning messages:(a) the MDG+ Initiative regional mechanism is possible as a *process* and an example of bringing in other relevant sectors; and (b) the MDG+ Initiative presents an example on how regional goals could be implemented at the country level through the institutionalization of national mechanisms (i.e. it is *doable* for Arab States where they do not need to start from scratch in monitoring the 2030 water-related SDGs)”.

Recommendation (e)

Benefit from the experiences of the MDG+ Initiative and related national mechanisms in preparing a methodology for developing indicators and measurement tools for the sustainable development goals on water and sanitation at the regional level to ensure consistency between them, on the one hand, and with the post-2015 development agenda, on the other.

Measures taken

19. ESCWA has prepared substantive reports on how the outcomes of the MDG+ Initiative can inform follow-up, monitoring and reporting on the water-related SDGs:

(a) The booklet entitled “Water Supply and Sanitation: Beyond 2015” (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/Booklet.1) reports progress in achieving access to water and sanitation in the Arab region within the context of global monitoring programmes and sheds light on the proposed water-related SDGs and targets from an Arab perspective;

(b) The booklet entitled “Regional Initiative for Establishing a Regional Mechanism for Improved Monitoring and Reporting on Access to Water Supply and Sanitation Services in the Arab Region: Supporting the Move from the MDGs to SDGs in the Arab Region” (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/Booklet.4) reviews the regionally specific set of MDG+ indicators adopted by AMWC and associated findings, and identifies the potential interconnection between the MDG+ water supply and sanitation indicators and the water-related SDG6 targets;

(c) The working paper entitled “Drawing on the MDG+ Initiative for informing the water-related SDGs in the Arab region” (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2016/WP.1) reviews the MDG+ Initiative and discusses the water-related SDGs and the linkages with MDG+ Initiative indicators; it informed the expert and high-level discussions mentioned under recommendation (d) above;

(d) The booklet entitled “Moving towards the SDGs in the Arab Region: Key Findings for the 2016 MDG+ Report” (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2016/Booklet.5) presents a review of the main findings of the 2016 Report of the MDG+ Initiative.

20. As detailed in recommendation (d) above, ESCWA organized the Expert Group Meeting on the Water-related Sustainable Development Goals (Beirut, 12-13 April 2016), the MDG+ Initiative: High Level Meeting on the Water-related Sustainable Development Goals (Amman, 1-2 November 2016) and the Expert Consultation on the SDG6 Indicators (Beirut, 21 December 2016), which discussed lessons learned from implementing the MDG+ Initiative and proposed ways forward for preparing and positioning Arab countries to monitor and report on the water-related SDGs, including SDG6. The UN-Water Integrated Framework Initiative on SDG6 and the experience of Jordan in serving as a pilot country for testing UN-Water draft methodologies were also shared at the High Level Meeting.

21. Lessons and experience gained from implementing the MDG+ Initiative were also presented and discussed at the twenty-fifth meeting of the UN-Water Senior Programme Manager (Stockholm, 27 August 2016) and at a World Water Week 2016 seminar on the theme “Informing the SDGs through the Arab MDG+ Initiative”, which was held in partnership with the League of Arab States, ACWUA and Sida (Stockholm, 31 August 2016). These two events led to greater collaboration between the MDG+ partner organizations and those working on SDG6 indicators and methodologies at the global level within the framework of UN-Water.

Recommendation (f)

Continue implementing water-energy-food nexus activities in the Arab region, in coordination with the League of Arab States secretariat, ministerial councils and other relevant bodies, especially in the light of new projects and developments in the field; these projects include building the capacities of ESCWA member States regarding the water-energy-food nexus to achieve sustainable development and enhancing water and food security in the Arab region through capacity-building, training and preparing analytical studies.

Measures taken

22. ESCWA launched the UNDA project on “Developing the capacity of ESCWA member States to address the water and energy nexus for achieving the SDGs” during an expert group meeting on the water-energy-food security nexus in the Arab region (Amman, 24-25 March 2015). The project has since issued the *Regional Policy Toolkit* (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2016/Manual), which includes modules on the seven areas identified by members of the ESCWA Committee on Water Resources and Committee on Energy or their designated representatives for examination in 2012, namely knowledge and awareness-raising, increasing policy coherence, examining the water-energy security nexus, increasing efficiency, informing technology choices, promoting renewable energy and addressing climate change and natural disasters. The toolkit was used as the basis for conducting the UNDA project’s Regional Policy Workshop on the Water-Energy Nexus (Amman, 30-31 October 2016), which provided training to senior government officials engaged in the water and energy sectors.

23. ESCWA also completed the sixth issue of the *ESCWA Water Development Report 6: The Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus in the Arab Region* (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/2), which introduces the water, energy and food security nexus analytical framework that positions the nexus within the context of sustainable development, human rights and climate change. An Arabic-English booklet was also produced to summarize the main findings of the report (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/Booklet.3). The ESCWA analytical framework was presented at the High-Level Meeting on the Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus (Cairo, 16-17 March 2016), organized by the League of Arab States and GIZ, and during regional deliberations on the water-related SDGs convened within the framework of the MDG+ Initiative.

24. ESCWA also launched a new project on “Promoting food and water security through cooperation and capacity development in the Arab region”, implemented in partnership with the League of Arab States to support the Arab Initiative on the Energy-Water-Food Nexus. It aims to inform officials in the water and agricultural sectors about information exchange and coordination regarding water and food security. The first coordination meeting of partners in component 1 of the project was organized by ESCWA and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (FAO-RNE) (Cairo, 29-30 May 2016). At the meeting, the geographic scope of the project was identified and the next steps for engaging countries and other stakeholders in this component were agreed upon. ESCWA prepared a draft proposal for an Arab Good Agricultural Practice framework, which was discussed during a meeting organized in cooperation with FAO-RNE (Cairo, 31 May-1 June 2016). ESCWA also organized a meeting of national focal points for the project on promoting food and water security in the Arab region, (Beirut, 5-6 October 2016), at which the different components and activities of the project were presented and participants exchanged views on how best to cooperate and move forward with the project. Moreover, a project website was established to disseminate project outputs.

Recommendation (g)

Continue to follow up on the implementation of recommendations issued at the tenth session of the Committee on Water Resources and activities under the ESCWA programme of work in the field of water resources between the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Committee; maintain the overall orientation with regard to water issues; and implement activities proposed under the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017, focusing on the need to meet the development needs of member States and ensuring consistency with the outcomes of international and regional conferences on water.

Measures taken

25. ESCWA continues to follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations of the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Committee on Water Resources by preserving and strengthening cooperation with the League of Arab States; implementing the recommendations adopted by AMWC, which commended ESCWA contributions to the Council’s work; and providing continued support on issues related to climate change assessment, climate change negotiations, the MDG+ Initiative, the water-related SDGs, shared water resources and the water-energy-food nexus.

26. ESCWA also continues to monitor global processes and highlight the linkages between them, through its normative work on water, and particularly in the *ESCWA Water Development Report* series issued on a biennial basis. The *ESCWA Water Development Report 6* (mentioned in para. 23 above) follows up on the outcomes of Rio+20 and the 2030 Agenda by considering the linkages that affect the achievement of water, energy and food security in the Arab region. The seventh issue examines the outcomes of global processes and associated regional processes from an integrated perspective that highlights the issues and concerns facing the Arab region, especially those related to the SDGs, the UNFCCC Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Recommendation (h)

Continue to participate effectively in regional and international forums and benefit from those forums to highlight the region’s water priorities and to support the regional agenda on water resources; and continue to support the implementation of activities and programmes of the Technical Scientific Advisory Committee of the Arab Ministerial Water Council and other related ministerial councils, in line with available resources, especially regarding implementing the Council’s recommendations and decisions related to ESCWA and climate change, the management of shared surface and ground water resources, water security and the water-energy-food nexus.

Measures taken

27. As a member of the AMWC Technical Scientific Advisory Committee, ESCWA reported on progress achieved under RICCAR, the MDG+ Initiative, the water-related SDGs, and the water-energy-food nexus at the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth sessions of the AMWC Technical Scientific Advisory Committee (Cairo, 24-26 May 2015; 24-26 January 2016; and 23-25 October 2016). In addition, ESCWA was invited to make interventions on preparations for and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the AMWC seventh session (Doha, 27 May 2015) and eighth session (Cairo, 26 October 2016). Progress reporting on these areas of work are provided earlier in this document under recommendation (a) on shared water resources; recommendations (b) and (c) on RICCAR; recommendations (d) and (e) on the MDG+ Initiative and the water-related SDGs; and recommendation (f) on the energy-water-food nexus.

28. ESCWA undertook the following activities in response to the AMWC Executive Bureau resolutions of January 2016, adopted based on the recommendations of the thirteenth session of the AMWC Technical Scientific Advisory Committee. The resolutions request ESCWA support in the following:

(a) Soliciting input from Arab countries on the peer review of the RICCAR assessment outputs, as per resolution III.2;

(b) Organizing the sixth and seventh Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries (Cairo, 3-6 April 2016; and Rabat, 25-29 September 2016), in partnership with the League of Arab States, UNEP and UNESCO, as per resolution III.3;

(c) Preparing the first and second MDG+ Initiative reports, as stated in resolution II.c;

(d) Conducting discussions with UN-Water counterparts in Amman (May 2016), Stockholm (August 2016) and Amman (November 2016), and with Sida in Stockholm (May 2016) and Beirut (September 2016) to consider the MDG+ Initiative with respect to supporting regional follow-up on the SDGs, as per resolution V;

(e) Organizing an expert group meeting on the water-related SDGs (Beirut, 12-13 April 2016) in partnership with the League of Arab States and ACWUA within the framework of the MDG+ Initiative, as per resolution VI-a and VI-b;

(f) Providing technical and financial support in the organization of the seventh intergovernmental consultative meeting on the draft framework convention on shared water resources in the Arab region (Cairo, 14-15 March 2016), and the recruitment of a legal expert to support the consultation, as per resolutions IV.a and IV.b;

(g) Supporting the Arab Initiative on the Energy-Water-Food Nexus, through the signing of bilateral agreements and the implementation of the Sida-funded project on “Promoting food and water security through cooperation and capacity development in the Arab region”, as per resolution V.3;

(h) Collaborating with other regional organizations to organize training on increasing the negotiating capacity of Arab States in the field of shared water resources, as per resolution VII.

Recommendation (i)

Submit an annual report to member States on progress in implementing activities of the ESCWA Water Resources Section and quarterly summaries of key activities.

Measures taken

29. ESCWA has prepared and submitted four reports to the members of the Committee on Water Resources on progress related to its activities. These were circulated by email and dated 3 September 2015, 15 December 2015, 30 December 2015 and 30 June 2016.

30. An informal interim meeting was conducted with the majority of confirmed Committee members or their delegated representatives in Amman, on 31 October 2016, on the sidelines of the Regional Policy Workshop on the Water-Energy Nexus (Amman, 30-31 October 2016). Participants discussed preparations for the twelfth session of the Committee, work conducted to date, planned activities and suggested next steps. As such, no formal progress report was submitted for the third and fourth quarters of 2016.

Recommendation (j)

Support coordination between the ESCWA Committee on Energy and the Committee on Water Resources, strengthen coordination between ESCWA subsidiary bodies and the Committee on Water Resources and facilitate the participation of the Committee Chair or Vice-Chair in meetings of other water bodies.

Measures taken

31. The Regional Policy Workshop on the Water-Energy Nexus (Amman, 30-31 October 2016) specifically targeted members of the ESCWA Committee on Water Resources and Committee on Energy. The workshop was informed by the *Regional Policy Toolkit* (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2016/Manual) that addresses the seven topics identified for consideration by members of both committees under the water and energy framework. The workshop also invited members of both committees to develop a proposal on joint pilot projects at the country level to promote water and energy sector coordination.

32. The Chair of the twelfth session of the Committee on Water Resources participated in the MDG+ Initiative Expert Group Meeting on the Water-related SDGs (Beirut, 12-13 April 2016), the High Level Meeting on the Water-related SDGs (Amman, 1-2 November 2016), and the Regional Policy Workshop on the Water-Energy Nexus (Amman, 30-31 October 2016). He also chaired the informal meeting of the Committee, held in Amman on 31 October 2016.

Recommendation (k)

Allocate extrabudgetary resources to implement additional activities on water resources.

Measures taken

33. A second amendment to the agreement between GIZ and ESCWA to support the implementation of ACCWaM project allocated an additional 80,000 euros to ESCWA in July 2016 to further support work on the Regional Knowledge Hub and the RICCAR/ACCWaM high-level meeting.

34. ESCWA has implemented a number of additional activities on water as a result of savings made during the implementation of its extrabudgetary projects. This included organizing an expert consultation on SDG6 (Beirut, 21 December 2016) under the Sida-funded project on “Establishing a regional mechanism for improved monitoring and reporting on access to water supply and sanitation services in the Arab region” that supports the MDG+ Initiative, and additional case studies and technical materials under the Sida-funded project on “Assessment of the impact of climate change on water resources and socio-economic vulnerability in the Arab region” that supports RICCAR.

35. ESCWA is pleased to report that the United Nations Secretariat allocated additional financial resources to the Commission in December 2016 to support follow-up on the 2030 Agenda during the financial year 2017,

based on mandates requesting additional work in this area by the Committee and the approval of a subsequent programme budget implication. These funds will support additional and expanded work on the water-related SDGs and complement resources available under the Commission's regular budget. ESCWA has also expressed its commitment to continue supporting regional training workshops on capacity development for climate change negotiations for the Arab countries, through its Regular Technical Cooperation Programme.
