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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Committee on Water Resources
Eighth session
Beirut, 17-19 December 2008

INFORMATION NOTE**A. BACKGROUND**

The Committee on Water Resources was established pursuant to Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) resolution 205 (XVIII) of 25 May 1995 concerning the establishment of a committee on water resources in ESCWA, endorsed by Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/26 of 24 July 1995. The aim of establishing the Committee was to strengthen regional cooperation by effectively involving stakeholders in member countries in the planning and implementation of the ESCWA programmes of work in the field of water resources. The Committee on Water Resources held its first session in Amman in 1997, and the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth sessions in Beirut in 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004, respectively, and the seventh session in Muscat in 2007. The Committee will hold its eighth session in Beirut from 17 to 19 December 2008.

B. AIMS

The aim of the current session is to provide a formal forum for discussion of the challenges and obstacles confronting the region in the field of water resources. The topics of this session focus on the potential impacts of climate change on the water resources sector in the ESCWA region, possible adaptation measures, and dealing with those impacts by member countries. The session will also review the progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, particularly Target 10 of Goal 7 concerning access to safe drinking water and sanitation in the countries of the ESCWA region. Proposals will be presented regarding available options for developing policies, introducing legislative and institutional reforms, and taking the action necessary for the enhancement of national capacities to expedite the required water supplies and sanitation services coverage and implementation of policy options based on the principles of the integrated water resources management. Member countries will be presented with an assessment of water quality management in the ESCWA region and a discussion will follow on a set of guidelines and proposals for the sustainable use of water resources and the protection of water quality.

The current session also aims at following up the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee on Water Resources at its seventh session and of resolutions adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth sessions. In addition, it will acquaint member countries with the proposed programme of work of ESCWA for the biennium 2010-2011 in the field of water resources.

C. AGENDA

The provisional agenda and annotations of the eighth session of the Committee on Water Resources are contained in document E/ESCWA/SDPD/2008/IG.1/L.1.

D. PARTICIPANTS

The meetings of this session of the Committee will be attended by the representatives of member countries. Governments participating in the session are responsible for the travel and accommodation expenses of their representatives, in accordance with United Nations practice. Relevant international, regional and non-governmental organizations and institutions will be invited to attend the session as observers, on the understanding that they are also responsible for the travel and accommodation expenses of their representatives.

E. DATE AND VENUE

The eighth session of the Committee on Water Resources will be held at United Nations House in Beirut from 17 to 19 December 2008. Registration will commence at 9:00 on Wednesday 17 December 2008, and the session will be opened at 10:00 on the same day. Session meetings will end at 13:00 on Friday 19 December 2008.

F. LANGUAGE OF THE SESSION

Session proceedings will be in Arabic, with simultaneous interpretation from and into Arabic and English. English may, if necessary, be used to present some papers.

G. ACCOMMODATION AND TRANSPORTATION

Following coordination with ESCWA, the Holiday-Inn Dunes in Beirut has decided to offer preferential prices to participants. Participants should contact the ESCWA secretariat to give details of their travel, including airline, flight number, date and time of arrival and date and time of departure, in order to enable ESCWA to make the necessary arrangements and reserve rooms in the hotel, and for the hotel management to arrange to meet participants at the airport.

H. ENTRY VISAS

ESCWA may be able to assist in obtaining entry visas from the Republic of Lebanon, and will coordinate with its relevant authorities in order to facilitate the formalities. Any participant who so wishes should send ESCWA a copy of his/her passport, giving all the necessary details.

I. CORRESPONDENCE

All session-related correspondence should be sent to the following ESCWA officials:

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