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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  
2012-2013 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 2012-2013 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 on integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development, of the strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013. While subprogramme 1 comprises the work of ESCWA in the fields of energy, water resources and productive sectors, and is implemented by the Sustainable Development and Productivity 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 countries and their relevance to the expected accomplishments in the field of water resources under subprogramme 1. The Committee is also invited to discuss ways to concretely measure the indicators of achievement in order to accurately monitor progress achieved in member countries 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 2012-2013 in the field of water resources were formulated on the basis of subprogramme 1 on integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development, of the strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013, which was adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-sixth session (Beirut, 17-20 May 2010).<sup>1</sup>

2. The Sustainable Development and Productivity Division (SDPD) at ESCWA is responsible for the implementation of subprogramme 1 through its three sections (Energy, Water Resources and Productive Sectors). During the biennium 2012-2013, SDPD will maintain focus on promoting regional and subregional cooperation on sustainable development in the fields of energy, water resources and productive sectors, and assisting member countries 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 Western Asia region, including issues that have emerged during the implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 2008-2009 and in 2010;

(b) Progress achieved by member countries in the implementation of global policy on sustainable development, including the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation which was adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2002, Agenda 21 which was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, and resolutions of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), in particular with regard to the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development which have been identified as the two themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio +20, to be held in 2012;

(c) The Arab Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change, which was adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment 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, and to include climate change policies in all sectors within national and regional policies for sustainable development;

(d) General Assembly resolution 63/281 of 3 June 2009 on "Climate change and its possible security implications", and resolution 281 (XXV) on "Addressing climate change issues in the Arab region" adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-fifth session (Sana'a, 26-29 May 2008), in which member country representatives requested the secretariat to prepare an assessment of the vulnerability to climate change of economic and social development in the region, with particular emphasis on fresh water resources.<sup>2</sup>

4. Driven by those global and regional mandates, ESCWA is exerting extensive efforts to develop an assessment of the impacts of climate change on water resources and socio-economic vulnerability in the Arab region, and build capacities of member countries on relevant climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. Therefore, additional activities on climate change that are multidisciplinary in nature are expected to be undertaken under subprogramme 1. Resources to support field projects related to the water sector during the biennium 2012-2013 have been secured by the Swedish International Development Cooperation

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<sup>1</sup> ESCWA, *Management issues: Revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013*, E/ESCWA/26/7. Available at: <http://documents.un.org>.

<sup>2</sup> ESCWA, *Report on the twenty-fifth session*, E/ESCWA/25/10/Rev.1, p. 5. Available at: <http://documents.un.org>.

Agency (Sida) and are being sought from the United Nations Development Account and the Government of Germany.

## I. REQUIRED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES

5. The Committee on Water Resources is invited to review the proposed outputs and provide its guidance to the secretariat based on the following two criteria: (a) the extent to which the proposed outputs respond to the needs of intended beneficiaries, namely ministries and authorities in the ESCWA region in charge of water resources issues; and (b) the extent to which those outputs contribute to the realization of the expected accomplishments of subprogramme 1, while taking into account also the outcome of the deliberations that take place at the present session.

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

### A. OBJECTIVE OF SUBPROGRAMME 1 FOR THE BIENNIUM 2012-2013

6. The objective of Subprogramme 1 is to achieve integrated sustainable management of natural resources in the ESCWA region, with emphasis on water, energy and the production sectors, while incorporating climate change responses into sectoral strategies and plans. The responsibility for implementing subprogramme 1 lies with the Sustainable Development and Productivity Division at ESCWA.

### B. EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Enhanced technical, human and institutional capacities of member countries to develop and implement national, subregional and regional policies, strategies and action plans for the sustainable management of energy and water resources in line with the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation	(a) (i) Increased number of positive responses, in follow-up surveys received from member countries and regional stakeholders, expressing satisfaction with ESCWA expert meetings and advisory and capacity-building services targeted at achieving their sustainable development goals  (ii) Increased number of measures designed and implemented by member countries, with ESCWA support, for the integrated sustainable management of natural resources, in line with the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
(b) Enhanced capacity of Governments and other public and private stakeholders to incorporate climate change responses into sectoral strategies and plans, and to stimulate financial and technical supports for the inclusion of climate change issues into plans and strategies	(b) (i) Increased number of countries implementing sustainable energy plans and initiatives including projects formulated or implemented with ESCWA support and financed through the clean development mechanism and other international financing mechanisms  (ii) Increased number of partners contributing to the preparation of ESCWA regional assessments and measures for climate change adaptation

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(c) Strengthened capacity in member countries to develop and apply best practices and plans for improving sustainable agriculture and rural livelihood and increasing the productivity and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, in support of achieving the Millennium Development Goals	(c) (i) Increased number of measures taken by small and medium-sized enterprises, with ESCWA assistance, to adopt environmentally sound technologies and their possible applications for sustainable rural livelihoods  (ii) Increased number of plans developed and best practices applied by member countries, based on ESCWA initiatives and support, for enhancing access to basic energy, water and sanitation services

### C. STRATEGY

7. The subprogramme will concentrate on enhancing knowledge and facilitating the formulation, adoption and implementation of integrated sustainable development strategies and policies in the light of the relevant global mandates arising from the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Millennium Development Goals, in particular Goal 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) and Goal 7 (ensure environmental sustainability), as well as the outcomes of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its thirteenth session (COP-13) (Bali, 3-15 December 2007) and at its fifteenth session (COP-15) (Copenhagen, 7-18 December 2009).

8. The subprogramme will continue to:

(a) Advocate and promote sustainable production and consumption patterns of energy and water resources, including improved access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation for a wider section of the population of the region;

(b) Serve as a forum for promoting policy dialogue as a means to enhance synergy, among the countries in the region on sustainable development priority issues, including climate change adaptation and mitigation;

(c) Facilitate cooperation among member countries on the management of shared water resources and the development of energy networks;

(d) Increase awareness of the possible impacts of climate change on water resources, and the precautionary measures and means needed to integrate climate change responses into sectoral strategies and plans;

(e) Support national and regional capacity-building, especially in the fields of integrated water resources management, energy efficiency, renewable energy applications and cleaner fossil fuels;

(f) Facilitate regional coordination and preparation for the implementation of regional and global commitments on sustainable development, in particular on the thematic areas to be addressed by the Commission on Sustainable Development.

9. In support of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the subprogramme will also promote sustainable rural livelihood approaches and increase the productivity and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises.

10. This will be achieved by undertaking quality research and analytical work; disseminating best practice; building capacity and rendering advisory services on priority sustainable development issues; promoting intraregional and interregional cooperation on sustainable development and issues relating to climate change, through partnerships with other regional commissions, international mechanisms for financing actions relating to climate change, and regional organizations, in particular the League of Arab States, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the United Nations Environment Programme/Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA), the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); and strengthening ESCWA regional mechanisms for coordination on energy and water as regional forums for advancing sustainable development issues such as those identified in UN-Water and UN-Energy, and the UNEP Environmental Management Group.

#### D. EXTERNAL FACTORS

11. Achieving the expected accomplishments under subprogramme 1 will be realized on the assumption that: (a) member countries are willing to adopt and apply the sustainable development policies advocated by world summits and by global and regional conferences; (b) there are no significant shortfalls in extrabudgetary funding; (c) political stability is improved, thereby allowing for a better cooperative environment among member countries in the region as well as a more effective implementation of technical cooperation; and (d) developed countries will fulfill their commitments to support the formulation and implementation of adaptation and mitigation measures by developing countries, including ESCWA member countries, through technology transfer and financial support.

#### E. OUTPUTS

12. The Sustainable Development and Productivity Division which comprises three sections (Energy, Water Resources and Productive Sectors) is responsible for the implementation of expected accomplishments under subprogramme 1. However, this document presents only the activities falling under the responsibility of the Water Resources Section. During the biennium 2012-2013, the following outputs connected to each accomplishment are expected to be delivered by the Water Resources Section:

(a) *Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies*

(i) *ESCWA*

a. Parliamentary documentation:

- Report of the Committee on Water Resources on its ninth session (2012, expected accomplishment (a)).

(ii) *Committee on Water Resources*

a. Substantive servicing of the six meetings of the tenth session of the Committee on Water Resources (2013, expected accomplishment (a));

b. Parliamentary documentation:

- Report on climate change socio-economic and environmental vulnerability of the water sector in ESCWA member countries (2013, expected accomplishment (a)).

(iii) *Ad hoc expert groups*

- a. Expert group meeting on regional cooperation for climate change adaptation (2012, expected accomplishment (b));
- b. Expert group meeting on shared water resources management: Avenues for regional cooperation (2013, expected accomplishment (a)).

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

- a. Substantive support to the executive secretariat of the ESCWA-UNEP-LAS Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR) and the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) (2012-2013, expected accomplishment (b));
- b. Substantive support and follow-up on selected resolutions of the Arab Ministerial Water Council (2012-2013, expected accomplishment (c)).

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

(i) *Recurrent publications*

- a. ESCWA Water Development Report 5: Issues in Sustainable Water Resources Management and Water Services (2012, expected accomplishment (a)).

(ii) *Non-recurrent publications*

- a. Regional cooperation for climate change adaptation: mechanisms and measures for incorporating regional priorities into sectoral strategies and plans (2012-2013, expected accomplishment (b)).

(iii) *Technical material*

- a. Fact sheet on Mapping and Monitoring Regional Initiatives on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (2012, expected accomplishment (b));
- b. Development and maintenance of the web page on water, environment, energy and institutional development and agriculture and enterprise development on ESCWA website (2012-2013, expected accomplishment (a));
- c. Manual for Enhancing the Technical Capacity of National Teams in ESCWA Member Countries on Climate Change Negotiations (2013, expected accomplishment (b)).

(iv) *Booklets, fact sheets, wall charts, information kits:*

- a. Promotional material for the World Environment Day (2012-2013, expected accomplishment (a));
- b. Promotional material for the World Water Day (2012-2013, expected accomplishment (a)).

(v) *Inter-agency meetings*

- a. Substantive contribution to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) (2012, expected accomplishment (a));
- b. Substantive contribution to the annual session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-20) on the thematic issues of the Commission (biodiversity, biotechnology, forests, mountains, tourism) (2013, expected accomplishment (a));
- c. Substantive input to COP-18 and COP-19 (2012-2013, expected accomplishment (b));
- d. Substantive input to global and regional forums on water issues (2012-2013, expected accomplishment (a));
- e. Substantive support to the United Nations coordination bodies, regional and global forums on water, energy, productive sector and environment issues (two) (2013, expected accomplishment (b));
- f. Substantive support to the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) (two) (2012, expected accomplishment (b)).

(c) *Technical cooperation*

(i) *Advisory services*

- a. Advisory missions at the request of member countries on issues related to sustainable development through the Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework Process (CCA/UNDAF) (two) (2012-2013, expected accomplishment (a)).

(ii) *Field projects (extrabudgetary)*

- a. Support for networking on integrated water resources management (2012-2013, expected accomplishment (b));
- b. Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (2012-2013, expected accomplishment (b));
- c. Support to member countries in the field of water supply and sanitation (2012-2013, expected accomplishment (c));
- d. Developing the capacities of the Arab countries in climate change adaptation by applying Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) tools in key sectors (Development Account) (2012-2013, expected accomplishment (b)).



Annex 1

**LEGISLATIVE MANDATES**

**Subprogramme 1. Integrated management of natural resources  
for sustainable development**

*General Assembly resolutions*

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| 57/253 | World Summit on Sustainable Development  |
| 63/217 | Natural disasters and vulnerability  |
| 63/281 | Climate change and its possible security implications  |
| 64/198 | Midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015                                 |
| 64/200 | International Strategy for Disaster Reduction  |
| 64/236 | Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development |

*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 |
|---------|---|

*Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions*

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 255 (XXIII) | The establishment of a regional mechanism for building capacities to manage shared water resources |
| 281 (XXV)   | Addressing climate change issues in the Arab region  |

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Annex II**RESOLUTIONS OF THE ARAB MINISTERIAL WATER COUNCIL  
CONCERNING THE WORK OF ESCWA**

The following table presents the paragraphs relevant to the work of ESCWA in the field of water resources as requested in resolutions adopted by the Arab Ministerial Water Council.

Res 2 – Regular session 1 30 June 2009	“Invites ESCWA to set up a mechanism for cooperation and coordination with the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA), the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), the Arab Water Council (AWC), and the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED) to prepare an in-depth study on progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals related to water supply and sanitation, taking into consideration the quality of service provided, and based on harmonized indicators and standards for evaluation and comparison, and report on the study progress to the Council’s Technical Scientific Advisory Committee at its next meeting.”
Res 5 – Regular session 1 30 June 2009	“Assigns the technical secretariat of the AMWC to re-disseminate the study that has been prepared by the economic sector of the secretariat of the League of Arab States and ESCWA on the legal and legislative aspects of protecting the Arab interests in water resources shared with non-Arab States.”
Res 11 – Regular session 1 30 June 2009	“Declares the third of March of every year the Arab Water Day.”
Res 18 – Regular session 2 2 July 2010	“Calls upon ESCWA, and in coordination with ACWUA, CEDARE, the World Health Organizations (WHO), AWC and RAED, to prepare a unified template of indicators (basic and additional) and standards for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals related to water supply and sanitation, and to forward it to the Council’s Technical Scientific Advisory Committee no later than 30 October 2010.”
Res 20 – Regular session 2 2 July 2010	“Invites the Center of Water Studies and Arab Water Security and ESCWA, in coordination with the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) and Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), to develop a legal framework for shared water resources within the Arab region to be discussed at the fourth meeting of the Council’s Technical Scientific Advisory Committee.”

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