



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



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

Consultative Meeting on the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Agenda:  
Reinforcing the Environmental Dimension of 2030 Agenda for Sustainability and Peace in the Arab Region  
Cairo, 14-15 February 2024

### INFORMATION NOTE

#### 1. BACKGROUND

Within the framework of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the League of Arab States are organizing a regional consultative meeting focused on the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda from 14 to 15 February in Cairo, Egypt. The meeting is mandated by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) in accordance with resolution 638 adopted at its 34<sup>th</sup> session on 26 October 2023.

The consultation is organized in preparation for the 2024 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development (AFSD), which will be held from 5 to 7 March 2024 in Beirut, Lebanon sharing the same theme as the [High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\)](#): "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions." The AFSD 2024 will address this theme from the perspective of advancing sustainability and peace in the Arab region. Its outcomes will contribute regional input to the 2024 HLPF, which will be convened in New York from 8 to 17 July 2024 and will review the below listed set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) noting that Goals 1 and 17 are considered every year:

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere;
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;
- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels;
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

The Arab regional consultation on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development are convened annually by ESCWA in consultation with its regional partners in preparation for the HLPF. The HLPF, without prejudice to the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the SDGs, supports the implementation and outcomes of the SDG Summit for advancing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. This year's regional consultation focuses on reinforcing the environmental dimension of 2030 Agenda for advancing sustainability and peace in the Arab region.

#### 2. OBJECTIVES AND PROCESSES

The consultative meeting will explore regional measures that reinforce the implementation of the SDGs under review in 2024, namely SDGs 1 (poverty), 2 (hunger), 13 (climate change), 16 (peace) and 17 (partnerships). It seeks to discuss innovative and resilient solutions rooted and guided by environmental principles that advance sustainability and peace. This meeting is timely, aligning with the outcomes of UN Climate Change Conference (COP 28) and its commitments. These include advancing climate resilient development; mobilizing additional funds for climate action and nature; encouraging sustainable agriculture, resilient food systems, nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches; and fostering circular economy approaches that facilitate a shift toward sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

The objectives of the meeting are to:

- Foster discussions among stakeholders on sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions building on regional and national initiatives and best practices;
- Explore opportunities to scale up solutions for implementing SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17 within the context of conflicts and crises impacting the region;
- Discuss regional opportunities for strengthening synergies and integration between the SDGs and Paris Agreement.
- Identify priority actions and means of implementation to achieve the SDGs under review.

The meeting will result in an outcome document highlighting the key messages to be presented to CAMRE, the AFSD and the HLPF this year.

### **3. THEMATIC AREAS**

The consultative meeting is structured around five thematic areas that support the achievement of SDGs under review from an environmental perspective. Discussions explore how accelerating the implementation of these SDGs intersects with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which the 2030 Agenda acknowledges as the primary international and intergovernmental forum for negotiating global response to climate change. Identified solutions and actions will require a collaborative approach, utilizing the means of implementation outlined in SDG 17 for comprehensive and impactful outcomes.

#### ***Theme 1: SDG 1 - End poverty through climate resilience, sustainable livelihoods and nature***

The meeting will discuss the global commitments and obligations for Arab countries to reduce inequalities through integrated and mutually reinforcing approaches that promote climate resilience, sustainable livelihoods and nature positive outcomes. Deliberations will examine the outcomes generated by COP28 and the Global Biodiversity Framework and the opportunities that they present to end poverty through integrated approaches and investment in climate and nature priorities in the region.

#### ***Theme 2: SDG2 - End hunger and ensure food security through sustainable agriculture and food system transformations***

Food insecurity in the Arab region now surpasses the global average and undernutrition is worsening. Climate change is exacerbating water scarcity and the loss of arable lands. With low productivity and increasing demand, the Arab region has become the world's largest net importer of food. Unsustainable expansion of agriculture leads to serious environmental challenges and to the increased emission of greenhouse gases (GHG), noting that globally agriculture is a significant emitter of GHGs.

Discussion will examine food systems transformation pathways, Food Summit +2 outcomes, circular practices, data integration and innovation, as well as the recognition during the COP28 global stocktake that safeguarding food security and ending hunger are priorities, particularly in areas where food production systems are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. Opportunities to set ambitious targets for climate-resilient agriculture through nature-based solutions in the next round of Nationally Determined Contributions will be explored.

#### ***Theme 3: SDG 13 – Climate action through integrated approaches***

Climate science informs climate policy and action, particularly in the Arab region where average temperature could increase by 4.8 °C by the end of the century and extreme climate events have become more frequent. Climate resilient policies and plans are needed to achieve climate adaptation and mitigation goals that are aligned with national and regional sustainable development priorities.

Discussions will focus on Arab strategies and commitments to achieve global goals through climate-resilient water and food systems, combatting biodiversity loss, and pursuing a just and inclusive energy transition. This includes regional efforts to contribute to the global target of tripling renewable energy capacity and doubling energy efficiency rates by 2030, while expediting the phase-down of unabated coal power and transitioning to net-zero emission energy systems. The progress achieved on these multiple tracks in the Arab region will be put in the perspective of the outcomes of the first Global Stocktake completed at COP 28.

#### ***Theme 4: SDG 16 - Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development***

The Arab region is one of the most fragile and crisis-affected regions in the world requiring a dual focus on addressing immediate humanitarian needs while laying the groundwork for long-term developmental efforts. To achieve the SDGs under review in the context of the Arab region, it is imperative to ensure the full, equitable, inclusive and effective representation and participation of local communities, men and women, youth and vulnerable groups in planning, development and access to basic needs in a manner that respects human rights and advance peace.

Discussions will focus on the role of institutions and governance of natural resources to prevent and mitigate tensions and the adverse effects of conflicts that weaponize access to water, energy and food on people and planet. Climate justice and the role of civil society to achieve effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels will also be addressed.

#### ***Theme 5: SDG 17 - Strengthening implementation through finance, technology, capacity building and partnerships***

Both the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement emphasize the importance of access to finance, technology and capacity building as means of implementation for achieving global goals. Scaling finance and investments for climate action and nature from all sources is imperative, as are building capacity for economic diversification and innovation that advance environmental objectives. Blending the sources of finance can be achieved through partnerships that complement national budget resources with funding provided by multilateral development banks, green funding instruments, bilateral cooperation, private sectors investors and philanthropic organizations.

Discussion will explore policies, plans and partnerships that are strengthening access to these means of implementation. Innovative instruments and regional initiatives that advance access to technology, capacity building and finance for achieving the SDGs under review will be highlighted. This includes progress in finalizing the Arab Climate Finance Access and Mobilization Strategy that is under review by CAMRE.

#### **4. PARTICIPANTS AND REGISTRATION**

The consultative meeting brings together government experts from Arab countries, practitioners, and civil society members involved in the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as concerned regional and international organizations and representatives from civil society and the private sector.

Invited and nominated participants are kindly requested to complete their registration by **Monday, 15 January 2024** via Indico, the United Nations Events and Conferences Platform, through the following link:

[https://indico.un.org/e/Consultative\\_Meeting\\_Environmental\\_Dimension\\_Reinforcing\\_SDGAgenda](https://indico.un.org/e/Consultative_Meeting_Environmental_Dimension_Reinforcing_SDGAgenda)

##### **Indico registration instructions**

###### ***New users***

Step 1. Set-up a new user account.

Step 2. You will receive an account activation link by email. Follow the link to activate your account.

Step 3. Fill the registration form for the Consultative Meeting on the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

###### ***Returning users***

Step 1. Use your username and password to login.

Step 2. Fill in the registration form for the Consultative Meeting on the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

***Recommended browsers*** for using Indico are Chrome, Firefox and Microsoft Edge.

Sponsorship for in-person participation is available for a limited number of government representatives and contributing experts based on UN Financial Rules and Regulations. Requests for sponsorship must be received in Indico no later than **Monday, 15 January 2024** to be eligible for consideration. Participants requesting sponsorship must **upload a copy of their national passport** when completing their Indico registration.

## 5. ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

### *Date and Venue*

The consultative meeting will be held in-person on 14 and 15 February 2024 at Steigenberger Hotel in Cairo, Egypt. Registered participants are also able to join the proceedings virtually through the Zoom platform. Onsite registration will start on 14 February at 9:00 am and the opening session will begin at 9:30 a.m. The meeting will close on 15 February by 2:30 pm.

### *Language of the meeting*

The meeting will be conducted in the Arabic and English languages. Interpretation between both languages will be provided for participants.

### *Accommodation and transportation*

Participants are requested to arrange their own hotel reservations in Cairo by directly contacting a hotel of their choice.

Participants are requested to arrange their own local transport between the airport, hotel, and the meeting venue. It is recommended to arrange airport pick-up with the selected hotel.

### *Entry visas*

Participants are responsible for securing their own visas for travel to Egypt, as may be necessary.

## 6. CORRESPONDENCE

Kindly contact the following focal points should you have any queries related to the meeting:

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