

Recommendations from the 19th Meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (listed by Session)

Session 1: Engaging with Regional and Global Processes: Regional Integration and the Arab Summit

1. RCM members agreed to the development of a unified UN programme of support to member countries to facilitate the preparatory work for the Arab Customs Union, including an Action Plan for 2014-2015 and the following activities:

- Using modeling tools to assess elements such as a unified customs tariffs, products to be included, etc.;
- Analyzing the socio-economic impact of different policy options related to the establishment of the Customs Union;
- Capacity building activities, including the training of customs officers in member countries;
- Support in WTO negotiation in light of the establishment of a Customs Union (accession support to non-members, and capacity building support to members)

ESCWA will initiate consultations with RCM members to determine the scope and outline of the programme. This will include possible contributions by FAO (on agricultural and animal products), UNEP (on chemicals and bio-hazardous materials), ECA (on strengthening regional value chains in industry in North Africa), and UNDP (on trade facilitation).

ESCWA will join the UNDP\ITFC Aid for Trade Project in order to ensure regional synergy and coordination.

2. Concerned UN agencies and LAS were called upon by ESCWA to contribute to the “Arab Economic Integration Report” with a focus on the Arab Customs Union to be produced in the second half of 2014. ESCWA will initiate contact with concerned UN agencies to determine modality of contributions.

3. Concerned UN agencies and LAS are also requested to contribute to an ESCWA led series of normative papers on the socio-economic impact of infrastructure connectivity in the region, with a focus on issues of transport and energy, with a view to:

- a. establish a legislative framework and guidelines
- b. develop project proposals to promote interconnectivity

4. OCHA will coordinate efforts with R/UNDG and RCM members on regional consultations in partnership with LAS and in the lead up to the World Humanitarian Summit to be held in Istanbul in 2016.

5. Concerned UN Agencies committed their support to LAS in the preparation of the three side Forums of the Fourth Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, Tunisia 2015 on Youth, Civil Society, and the Private Sector.

6. RCM members agreed to accelerate the implementation of the activities included in the Matrix of Activities of the UN-LAS General Cooperation Meeting in Vienna in 2012 and to use the matrix as a tool to monitor implementation before the next coordination meeting in Geneva, tentatively scheduled for 17-19 June 2014, taking into consideration the importance of the post-2015 agenda.

- RCM Members agreed to maintain two versions of the matrix: one comprehensive matrix managed by DPA and LAS; and one focused on RCM collaborative actions (not including single-agency activities);

- Cluster leaders (DPA, ESCWA & UNDP, OCHA) to circulate the RCM collaborative matrix relevant to their cluster before the end of 2013;
- RCM members to include qualitative assessments of implementation in the status column of the matrix

Session 2: Enhancing Coordination among RCM Members on Priority Issues

7. All Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) will prepare clear annual Work Plans linked to deliverables and a timeline for implementation to be pre-approved. Updates by RCM TWGs should also be shared well ahead of time of the next meeting.

8. The TORs and scope of the TWG on Climate Change should be reformulated with narrower focus and rotational leadership of the group by different agencies. UNEP will take the initiative to organize consultations early in 2014.

9. The TOR of the Food Security and Nutrition TWG will be reviewed and adjusted by February 2014. FAO to lead discussions.

Session 3: Engaging with Regional and Global Processes: Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Arab Summit

10. UN agencies will ensure that any proposals to the 2015 Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, including parts of the regional SDG report, are presented to the relevant Ministerial Councils by no later than April 2014, so that they are considered in the July 2014 Meeting of the Special Committee for the preparation of the 2015 Summit in Tunis.

- LAS will provide to RCM members the master list of all upcoming Ministerial Councils in 2014

11. UN agencies were requested to follow-up on national consultations, including youth consultations, on the post-2015 Development Agenda that were initiated in 2012, and to place results at the service of upcoming regional inter-governmental consultations.

12. UN entities to continue and to enhance support for the follow-up on the implementation of decisions and resolutions of past Arab Economic and Social Development Summits, and recommendations of side Forums made since 2009. LAS will propose modality of interventions and support.

13. RCM members were urged to coordinate stronger linkages between the global disaster risk reduction framework to be developed by 2015 and the Sustainable Development Goals, in order to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda will reflect the risks of disasters and the need to build resilience.

14. RCM members agreed that the Inter-Agency MDG Thematic Working Group for Arab States will revise its ToRs to allow it to reflect the transition to the Post 2015 Agenda/SDGs. Among the TWGs new tasks will be acting as a repository of information and documentation, maintaining coordinated timelines of regional events, and initiating joint activities. The Group would also be the coordination interface with the League of Arab States.

15. Members agreed on the importance of supporting a regional Annual Ministerial Review back to back with the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in order to enhance the linkages between the regional and the global processes. UNEP will share an Arabized “white paper” on embedding the environment in the SDGs.

16. RCM members thanked the generosity and hospitality of the League of Arab States for hosting the 19th Meeting of the RCM at the LAS headquarters in Cairo.