



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



UN Climate Change High-Level Champions

## **Towards COP27: Arab Regional Forum on Climate Initiatives to Finance Climate Action and the SDGs**

Beirut, 15 September 2022

### **Information Note**

#### **Background**

The Arab region is vulnerable to climate change. Temperature has increased an average of 0.8° C over the last 20 years and are projected to increase by 2.5 C by mid-century. Water and food security is being affected by reduced rainfall and desertification. Droughts, heat waves, forest fires, sand and dust storms, sea-level rise and flash floods are impacting health, homes, livelihoods and nature in urban, rural and coastal communities alike. Investments in agriculture for improved food security, integrated management of water resources and desalination, and coastal zone management are among the top climate action priorities articulated by Arab States for advancing climate resilience.

Increasing resilience also requires raising ambition to collectively achieve the global climate goal. Arab States are committed to diversifying their energy mix and scaling up investments in renewable energy and new energy sources, such as green hydrogen. Job opportunities thanks to clean energy options are being created for women and youth, particularly in rural areas where access to energy remains limited. Investment opportunities in the building sector are growing where sustainable cooling systems and improvements in energy efficiency are necessary to respond to temperature peaks reaching beyond 50° C in parts of the region.

Arab States are seeking to achieve adaptation and mitigation co-benefits through pipelines of projects aimed at improving energy and water use efficiency in irrigated agriculture, reducing water loss and energy costs in water supply and sanitation networks, and expanding investments in solar and wind energy to reduce emissions in sectors where cost recovery can be reasonably achieved. Transformational adaptation projects are also necessary, particularly since 3.5 times more public international climate finance goes to mitigation rather than adaptation in the region. Despite being one of the most water scarce regions in the world, Arab States also only receive 6% of international public finance flows for adaptation. Projects that achieve co-benefits can thus help to advance both adaptation and mitigation goals.

Most Arab States have quantified their climate finance needs. Totals amount to between USD 436 billion and USD 478 billion by the year 2030, based on official communications submitted by 13 Arab States under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) up through the year 2020. However, climate finance flows to the region are estimated at only USD 5.1 – 7.4 billion a year, with international finance flows estimated at USD 3.6 – 4.9 billion annually; private sector flows amount to only USD 1.5 – 2.5 billion a year and are largely concentrated in renewable energy investments. Partnerships and innovative financing arrangements that leverage public and private resources can help Arab States realise their climate commitments under the Paris Agreement and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

#### **Regional Forums Series**

The Arab Regional Forum on Climate Initiatives to Finance Climate Action and the SDGs forum is one of five regional forums being organised by the Egyptian Presidency of COP27, the UN Climate Change High-level Champions, and the five United Nations Regional Commissions (ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA). The

forums are coordinated under the leadership of the United Nations Deputy Secretary General through the Regional Commissions New York Office (RCNYO) as a coherent set of regional preparatory events on climate finance leading up to COP27.

### **Objective**

The Arab Regional Forum on Climate Initiatives to Finance Climate Action and the SDGs will explore the climate finance needs of Arab States to ensure water, energy and food security under changing climate conditions. It will include a review of the articulated climate finance needs of Arab States, including current financing flows and gaps. Bankable projects that can accelerate climate action will be showcased by member States as well as innovative forms of finance and regional initiatives that can create opportunities for private sector investment, blended finance and bilateral support. In doing so, the forum will:

- **Facilitate engagement** with a broad set of partners and stakeholders to accelerate public and private investment mobilisation and blended finance opportunities around concrete projects and initiatives that correspond to the distinct needs of developing countries in addressing climate change in a holistic manner and narrowing the current climate finance gap.
- **Identify synergies** and entry-points for climate finance to support the acceleration of access to clean energy, energy efficiency technologies as well as means for ensuring water and food security, which remain key catalysts for the attainment of the SDGs as well as mitigation and adaptation goals in the Arab region. This may feature examples of financial institutions acting on climate change through investment commitments, as well as ways to benefit from projects that reduce GHG emissions.
- **Connect institutional investors, private sector financiers and development partners with governments** and broker dialogues around co-creating investment opportunities in support of regional priority actions. This will include sharing of bankable projects and initiatives that are aligned with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and ready for implementation, scale-up and replication at the country and regional levels.

### **Participants**

The forum will foster dialogue among ministers and high-level representatives of the public and private sectors and the international development community who are committed to delivering on climate finance in the Arab region.

- From the **public sector**, focus is be placed on eight Arab countries that have articulated and prioritized bankable projects for climate financing. This includes ministers and high-level officials from ministries responsible for finance, planning, water, energy, agriculture and the environment from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman and Tunisia. Representatives from other Arab States are also welcomed to participate.
- From the **private sector**, the forum aims to engage institutional investors and private sector actors who have expressed interest and commitment to advancing climate action in the region and in their operations. This includes members of the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ), private sector networks, as well as institutional investors such as pension funds and financial service providers.
- From the **international development community**, representatives from multilateral development banks (MDBs), bilateral donors and development partners, as well as regional and international philanthropic organisations mobilizing finance for climate action are invited to engage in the discussions and contribute to this regional effort.

Members of the United Nations System, regional organizations and international experts engaged in mobilizing and facilitating access to climate finance in Arab States will also attend.

## **Agenda (draft)**

### **Opening Session**

- Opening remarks by Egypt as COP27 President
- Message from the United Nations Deputy Secretary General (video)
- Message from the Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Climate Action (video)
- Opening statement by UN Climate Change High-Level Champions
- Opening statement by the ESCWA Executive Secretary and United Nations Under Secretary-General
- Review of findings from the Arab Climate Finance Access and Mobilization Strategy (2022-2030)

### **Scaling up Climate Finance for Mitigation**

*Framing, project pipelines, dialogue and exchange among countries, private sector and institutional investors, MDBs, bilateral donors and development partners on:*

- Renewable energy projects
- Energy efficiency projects
- Green hydrogen

### **Catalysing Action for Adaptation and Achieving Co-Benefits**

*Framing, project pipelines, dialogue and exchange among countries, private sector and institutional investors, MDBs, bilateral donors and development partners on:*

- Desalination
- Agriculture projects (irrigation, rainwater harvesting)
- Wastewater treatment and reuse
- Nature-based and biodiversity projects

### **Innovative Finance and Regional Initiatives**

*Exchange on national and regional initiatives, platforms and innovative finance solutions, including:*

- Climate/SDG Debt Swap – Donor Nexus Initiative
- Regional Initiative to Promote Small-Scale Renewable Energy Applications in Rural Areas of the Arab Region (REGEND)
- Multi-country and regional initiatives

### **Closing Session**

- Summary of conclusions
- Next steps
- Closing statements

## **Organising Partners**

The Arab Regional Forum will be chaired by Egypt in its capacity as the incoming COP27 Presidency. It is organised in partnership with the UN Climate Change High-Level Champions and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

## **Date and Venue**

The one-day regional forum will be hosted by ESCWA at the United Nations House in Beirut, Lebanon on Thursday, 15 September 2022 in the Main Hall conference room. The opening session will commence at 9:30 am and the forum will conclude by 5:00 pm on the same day. Lunch and coffee breaks will be offered at the meeting venue.

The meeting will be organized in an onsite format, with online access provided to those who are unable to participate in person. All registered participants will receive the online link to the meeting one week before the event.

For participants attending the meeting onsite, pedestrian access to the United Nations House is provided through the Gibran Khalil Gibran Garden entrance in front of the building. Participants are kindly asked to bring photographic identification with them and to allow sufficient time to pass through security to collect their meeting badge. Embassies are kindly requested to provide ESCWA with ground transportation details regarding the arrival of ministers from their country to facilitate car access to the building entrance.

### ***Language***

The meeting will be conducted in the English language. Simultaneous translation will be provided between the Arabic and English languages for onsite and online participants.

### ***Registration***

Registration for onsite and online participation is requested by **Monday, 15 August 2022** via Indico, the United Nations Events and Conferences portal, at the following link: <https://indico.un.org/event/1002224/>

New Indico users will be asked to set up a new user account, which will be activated by an email link. Returning users can use their username and password to log in. Please then select the link to the “Arab Regional Forum on Climate Initiatives to Finance Climate Action and the SDGs” to complete and submit the registration form online. It is recommended to use one of the following browsers to complete the Indico registration process: Chrome, Firefox or Microsoft Edge.

Designated officials from Arab States are kindly requested to upload their personalized letter of invitation or letter of nomination to the Indico registration portal. Participants attending the meeting in person are asked to upload a clear, colour passport-like photo of themselves to allow ESCWA to issue a meeting badge.

A limited budget is available for the sponsorship of designated officials from Arab States. Sponsorship includes roundtrip air travel to Beirut, a daily subsistence allowance to cover hotel, meals and incidental expenses for up to two nights, and a terminal allowance to facilitate ground transportation to and from the airport. Roundtrip tickets are issued in economy class on the least expensive direct route, in accordance with United Nations Financial Rules and Regulations, with special allowances for business class tickets requested for ministers. Tickets will be issued following registration to the Indico portal and no later than three week prior to the forum. Ticket changes will be the subsequent responsibility of the participant.

Requests for sponsorship must be received by ESCWA no later than **Monday, 8 August 2022** to be eligible for consideration. Requests for sponsorship must be indicated at the time of registration and include a scanned copy of the national passport with a letter of nomination or invitation confirmation. Participants approved for sponsorship will be asked to complete a bank details form to allow for the electronic transfer of their sponsorship entitlements following the meeting. Due to the limited funds available, priority will be given to participants delivering interventions to the forum.

### ***Accommodation and transportation***

Participants are requested to arrange their own hotel reservations by directly contacting a hotel of their choice in Beirut. ESCWA can provide registered participants a list of hotels that offer preferential room rates upon request. Participants are to arrange their own local ground transport between the airport, hotel and the United Nations House. It is recommended to arrange airport pick-up from the airport through their selected hotel.

### ***Entry visas***

Participants are requested to secure their own visas for travel to Lebanon, as may be necessary. The list of countries whose nationals can secure a visa upon arrival to Lebanon is available at: <https://www.general-security.gov.lb/en/posts/38>. ESCWA can coordinate with the Government of Lebanon to assist in obtaining entry visas for participants who are unable to secure visas in their home countries. Those in need of such assistance should complete their registration for the meeting and send a colour, scanned copy of their national passport containing to ESCWA no later than **Monday, 8 August 2022**.

### ***Additional information***

Further information and background materials to inform the meeting are available at:

<https://www.unescwa.org/events/towards-cop27-arab-regional-forum-climate-finance>

### ***Correspondence***

Inquiries and all correspondence should be directed to the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies at ESCWA through following email: [ESCWA-ACCCP@un.org](mailto:ESCWA-ACCCP@un.org)