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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Fourth Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries
Doha, Qatar, 19- 21 May 2015

DRAFT INFORMATION NOTE

A. BACKGROUND

For the whole Arab region climate change and its impacts have been recognised as a major challenge to national sustainable socio-economic development. The global negotiations on climate change are highly relevant to the people and their future livelihoods in the whole region aiming at meaningful international agreements to (1) limit or reduce the root causes of climate change (mitigation) and (2) develop mechanisms for adapting to unavoidable impacts from climate change (adaptation).

The governments of Arab countries have shown a keen interest to actively participate in the preparatory processes at regional and global levels as well as in hosting in Qatar the negotiation processes of the COP 18 in 2012. While each country in the region has slightly different needs and interests, it has been recognised that many of the challenges in the Arab region are similar and hence the national interests and approaches to the negotiations tend to show significant similarity.

To move the agenda forward towards successful future negotiations, negotiators and those supporting the national negotiation teams require an in depth understanding of the history of the negotiation process on climate change and the recent developments and outcomes from COP meetings. To improve the chances for achieving meaningful results in future negotiations, communications and exchange between the countries in the region can be further enhanced to reach a better understanding of common interests and improve common positions. For future negotiations in the COP 20 that will be held in Lima, Peru end of 2014, and beyond it is also important to expand a common vision and further develop national capacities for climate change related negotiations. This is particularly important for more junior staff from the respective government institutions which will support their negotiation teams and may eventually take over the role of negotiators in the future.

B. SCOPE

Upon a request for support through Technical Cooperation from the League of Arab States (LAS) ESCWA jointly with the LAS conducted between 22 and 24 October 2013 a three day "Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries" in Amman, Jordan. The workshop was hosted by the ESCWA Technology Centre at the facilities of the Jordanian Royal Scientific Society and attended by 16 participants from nine Member States. The ESCWA-LAS training course contributed to enhanced knowledge and strengthened capacity of representatives and negotiators from Arab countries to adequately address issues related to climate change and the respective national concerns for mitigation and adaptation actions for upcoming future negotiation processes on climate change. With the acquired knowledge the Arab negotiators and representatives are better equipped to address climate change related negotiations at regional and global level.

In its 25th Session held in November 2013, CAMRE passed resolution 421 commending the cooperation between LAS and ESCWA in holding a training workshop in October 2013 to improve national negotiation skills for climate change negotiations of Arab negotiators. The resolution also requested holding two such workshops in 2014, with at least one of them taking place before the meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies that is taking place in Bonn, Germany from 4-15 June 2014 and the other workshop to be convened before the COP20.

In this respect ESCWA and LAS organized the second training workshop between 26 and 28 May 2014 in Amman, Jordan. The training was based on ESCWA developed “Guide on Climate Change Negotiations for Representatives and Negotiators from Arab Countries” and aims to develop a better understanding of the climate change policy framework, and shall consider also the challenges currently faced by climate change negotiators in making progress towards new agreements, taking into account the on-going negotiations. The meeting was attended by 40 participants from 13 Arab countries.

Within the same context, LAS requested from ESCWA to organize a third workshop in preparation for the global negotiations that took place at the UNFCCC COP-20 in Lima, Peru during the period 1-12 December 2014. The workshop that was hosted by the Environment Public Authority in Kuwait during the period 11-13 November 2014 allowed the exchange of experiences and knowledge sharing between today’s negotiators and the future generation of negotiators from different countries in the region on the development of strategies for improved common positions of Arab countries during the negotiation process. The workshop was attended by 55 participants from 12 countries.

ESCWA and LAS continue to cooperate to build the capacity of negotiators in member countries in preparation for the UNFCCC/COP 21 that will be held in Paris during the period 30 November - 11 December 2015. Accordingly, ESCWA and LAS are organizing the Fourth Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar during the period 19-21 May 2015.

C. OBJECTIVES

The workshop seeks to:

- Develop a comprehensive overview of the outcomes and implications of the latest ad-hoc working groups’ sessions took place in 2015 and the findings of the COP 20 in Lima, Peru in December 2014;
- Learn about the history of the negotiation process on climate change, the recent developments and outcomes and the implications (opportunities and challenges) for countries in the region;
- Receive guidance for future negotiations based on the updated ESCWA Guide on Climate Change Negotiations for Representatives and Negotiators from Arab Countries, and discuss respective national experiences;
- Establish a dialogue between the future generation of climate change negotiators from Arab countries and official senior negotiators to facilitate improved knowledge and negotiation skills on emerging climate change negotiation issues and the development of common positions;
- Develop an improved understanding of potentials for common positions between countries in the region and to relate them to the positions of major political negotiation groups and to address challenges and limits of such common positions and how to make best use of these in the context of future climate change negotiations;
- Understanding possible mitigation actions in key sectors by developing countries within the scope of the new post-2020 climate change agreement with the full recognition of the common but differentiated responsibilities principle.

D. ORGANIZATION AND VENUE OF THE MEETING

The workshop is organized by the League of Arab States and ESCWA and hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Doha, Qatar, to jointly support a capacity development initiative for young potential negotiators and climate change experts from the Arab countries. The meeting will be held inDoha, Qatar.

E. PARTICIPANTS

Climate experts from ministries responsible for climate change negotiation in the Arab member states are invited to participate in the workshop. A block of rooms have been reserved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at theHotel,, Doha at a preferential room rate. More details on accommodation and logistical matters will be sent to the nominated participants in the due time.

F. CORRESPONDENCE

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