

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

Committee on Water Resources
Thirteenth session
Beirut, 27-28 June 2019



Item 10 of the provisional agenda

**Implementation of the recommendations made by the
Committee on Water Resources at its twelfth session****Summary**

The Committee on Water Resources was established pursuant to resolution 205 (XVIII) adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) on 25 May 1995 and endorsed by Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/26 of 24 July 1995, in recognition of the vital role played by the water resources sector in the economic and social development of Arab countries. The Committee helps in setting priorities for the ESCWA programme of work in the field of water resources; supporting member States in implementing recommendations made at regional and international conferences; and fostering intraregional cooperation.

The Committee convenes its sessions biannually. It held its twelfth session in Amman from 22 to 24 March 2017 and made recommendations addressed to member States and to the ESCWA secretariat. The Water Resources Section of the ESCWA Sustainable Development Policies Division is responsible for carrying out work in this field. The present document sets out actions and activities undertaken by the Section pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee on Water Resources at its twelfth session.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ACCWaM	Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region
ACSAD	Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands
ACWUA	Arab Countries Water Utilities Association
AFSD	Arab Forum for Sustainable Development
AMWC	Arab Ministerial Water Council
AWARENET	Arab Integrated Water Resources Management Network
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GIS	Geographic information system
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GmbH (German Agency for International Cooperation)
HLPF	High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
RICCAR	Regional Initiative for the Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDPD	Sustainable Development Policies Division
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNDA	United Nations Development Account
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AT ITS ELEVENTH SESSION AND MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THEM

1. At its twelfth session, held in Amman from 22 to 24 March 2017, the Committee on Water Resources issued recommendations addressed to the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and others addressed to member States.¹ The present document reviews actions and activities undertaken by ESCWA to implement the recommendations pertaining to its work.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE ESCWA SECRETARIAT

Recommendation (a)

Strengthen training programmes on sustainable development issues related to water resource management, the water-energy-food nexus, shared water resources, climate change and sanitation; and benefit from information technologies in those programmes to increase the number of beneficiaries.

Measures taken

2. In response to this recommendation, ESCWA developed tailored training programmes to respond to national needs within the regional context in the noted areas. This included preparing and delivering training materials and technical assistance to member States in support of water resources management through the following workshops:

3. Under the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project on Developing the Capacity of ESCWA Member Countries to Address the Water-Energy Nexus for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals, two operational manuals on renewable energy ([E/ESCWA/SDPD/2017/Toolkit.2](#)) and technology transfer ([E/ESCWA/SDPD/2017/Toolkit.3](#)) were issued, which complemented an initial operational manual on resource efficiency ([E/ESCWA/SDPD/2016/Toolkit.1](#)). These training materials informed the implementation of three regional workshops listed below. Members of the ESCWA Committee on Water Resources were invited to attend or designate a representative to participate in the final policy workshop.

- Second Regional Capacity-building Workshop on Renewable Energy (Beirut, 11-12 July 2017);
- Third Regional Capacity-building Workshop on Technology Transfer (Amman, 30-31 October 2017);
- Final Regional Policy Workshop on the Water-Energy Nexus (Beirut, 11-12 December 2017).

4. On shared water resources, ESCWA prepared two working papers, namely the “Overview of Shared Water Resources Management in the Arab region for Informing Progress on SDG 6.5” ([E/ESCWA/SDPD/2017/Technical Paper.13](#)) and “Progress on Shared Water Resources Management in the Arab Region: Regional Baseline for SDG Indicator 6.5.2”. ([E/ESCWA/SDPD/2018/WP.1](#)). These papers informed two expert meetings on ways to strengthen shared water resources management, which were convened in Cairo (29-30 November 2017) and Beirut (6-7 December 2018). Both meetings involved a training component on the SDG 6.5.2 indicators methodology by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which serves as a co-custodian of this global indicator with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). UNESCO contributed to the second meeting to support capacity development on the groundwater aspect of the indicator methodology.

¹ The recommendations are included in the report on the twelfth session of the Committee on Water Resources ([E/ESCWA/SDPD/2017/IG.1/9/Report](#)).

5. On climate change, the following regional, subregional and national workshops were organized by ESCWA in collaboration with various partners, along with tailored training materials and datasets:

- Training Workshop on Sand and Dust Storms in the Arab Region (Cairo, 10-12 February 2018), which included training on computer-based prediction models for Arab meteorological services;
- National Training Workshop on the Applications of Climate Change Impact and Vulnerability Assessments for Egypt (Cairo, 11-15 March 2018) and Lebanon (Beirut, 26-30 November 2018), which focused on the use of geospatial information systems (GIS) for conducting climate change assessments;
- Advanced Courses on Adaptation Metrics for Agriculture and Water (Benguerir, Morocco, 24-25 October 2018), which showcased outputs from regional climate models and remote sensing products;
- National Workshop on Sendai Framework Monitor and National Disaster Loss Accounting System and Linkage of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction for Iraq (Beirut, 18-21 December 2018), which provided training on database tools for informing the preparation of Iraq's national Sendai report;
- Training Workshop: Climate Change and Water Resources (Kuwait, 14 March 2019), which discussed regional climate modelling principles and GIS tools for climate change analysis.

6. On sanitation, ESCWA facilitated the participation of MDG+ Initiative National Monitoring Team members in the first Global Workshop for Integrated Monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal 6 on Water and Sanitation (The Hague, Netherlands, 21-23 November 2017), which is further elaborated under recommendations (b) and (c) below.

Recommendation (b)

Benefit from the outcomes of the Regional Initiative for Establishing a Regional Mechanism for Improved Monitoring and Reporting on Access to Water Supply and Sanitation Services in the Arab Region (MDG+ Initiative) in terms of available information and data, lessons learned and the institutional framework, and develop a framework to shift from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the SDGs in consultation with Committee members, including capacity-building activities, to prepare member States to develop national sustainable development plans and monitor and follow up on implementing the SDGs;

Recommendation (c)

Provide continuous technical support to Arab countries in collecting data and measuring indicators adopted by the Arab Ministerial Water Council on water supply, sanitation and waste water; and continue cooperation with the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association to review and disseminate those data and prepare reports thereon.

Measures taken

7. ESCWA organized in coordination with the League of Arab States, ACWUA and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) a special session during Arab Water Week 2017 to launch the Arabic language edition of the 2016 Report of the MDG+ Initiative (Dead Sea, Jordan, 21 March 2017). The session highlighted how lessons learned from the MDG+ Initiative can inform monitoring and reporting on SDG 6 and showcased the experiences of the MDG+ National Focal Points from Tunisia and the State of Palestine in fostering exchange across ministries and utilities responsible for the provision of water supply, sanitation and wastewater treatment services as well as statistical counterparts in monitoring efforts. This was complemented by an Expert Group Meeting on Methodologies for Meeting the Water-Related Sustainable Development Goals at the Global, Regional and National Levels (Amman, 22-23 March 2017),

which further discussed the importance of building information and database tools and institutional mechanisms to coordinate and inform SDG monitoring and reporting at the national and regional levels.

8. A joint World Water Day event was convened alongside the expert group meeting, which both included focus on wastewater. The event included an opening statement by the Ambassador of Sweden to Jordan, the regional launching of the 2017 *World Water Development Report* on wastewater led by UNESCO, and presentations by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation of Jordan and the Ministry of Electricity and Water of Kuwait. Interventions by ACWUA and ESCWA focused on how the knowledge gained from the MDG+ Initiative can help countries organize reporting under the SDGs. The event also featured the launching of ESCWA booklet on *Wastewater: an Arab Perspective* ([E/ESCWA/SDPD/2017/BOOKLET.1](http://www.unescwa.org/SDPD/2017/BOOKLET.1)), which draws on MDG+ Initiative data on the quantities of wastewater collected, percentage of wastewater treated with the associated treatment level and the type of treated wastewater use, as well as success examples of treated wastewater reuse in Arab States.

9. During the Global Workshop for Integrated Monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal 6 on Water and Sanitation (The Hague, 21-23 November 2017), ESCWA and ACWUA delivered a presentation on “Linking national, regional and global reporting on SDG 6” which highlighted lessons learned from the MDG+ Initiative implementation and follow-up consultations on SDG 6. ESCWA also facilitated working group discussions among Arab State representatives, including the participating MDG+ National Focal Points, to contribute to plenary discussion on how to improve monitoring and reporting on SDG6 drawing upon this regional experience. ESCWA and UN-Water, the coordinator for the Global Monitoring Initiative on SDG 6 (GEMI), have also been in regular communication regarding the identification national GEMI focal points to the global custodian agencies and to advance work on methodologies and indicators of interest to Arab and water-scarce regions. This includes target SDG 6.4, which does not yet have an indicator for measuring the number of people facing water scarcity. ESCWA also regularly highlights these concerns during meetings of the UN-Water Senior Programme Managers and associated consultations.

10. Lessons learned from implementing the MDG+ Initiative were also shared during the Regional Preparatory Meeting on Water Issues for the 2018 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and High-level Political Forum (HLPF) (Beirut, 28-29 March 2018), and informed the preparation of the ensuing Outcome Document ([E/ESCWA/RFS/2018/CRP.2](http://www.unescwa.org/RFS/2018/CRP.2)), which iterated the importance of recognizing access to water and sanitation as a human right. A special session on “Water and SDGs: An Arab Perspective” (Beirut, 24 April 2018) was convened during the 2018 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development (AFSD) by ESCWA and members of the HLPF Working Group established under the auspices of the Arab Ministerial Water Council in 2017. The session discussed water priorities and challenges affecting SDG progress, which were included in the AFSD meeting report. These key messages were then conveyed to the Tenth Session of the Arab Ministerial Water Council (Kuwait City, 2 May 2018) and contributed to regional input to the 2018 HLPF (New York, 9-18 July 2018).

11. These processes and support provided to member States have helped to bridge regional MDG+ Initiative processes with global monitoring and reporting mechanisms on SDG 6. Recognition of the experience and knowledge gained from the MDG+ Initiative is evidenced by the fact that MDG+ datasets on wastewater collection, treatment and reuse have been referenced in several global reports, including the following:

- *World Water Development Report 2017: Wastewater – an untapped resource* (UN-Water/UNESCO-WWAP, 2017) – pp. 92-94 (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/water/wwap/wwdr/2017-wastewater-the-untapped-resource/>);
- *Progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene: 2017 update and SDG baselines* (WHO/UNICEF/JMP, 2017) – p. 51 (https://www.unicef.org/publications/index_96611.html);
- *Progress on Wastewater Treatment – Piloting the monitoring methodology and initial findings for SDG indicator 6.3.1* (UN-Water/WHO/UN-Habitat, 2018) – p. 27 (<http://www.unwater.org/publications/progress-on-wastewater-treatment-631/>);

- *Sustainable Development Goal 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation* (United Nations, 2018) – p. 62 (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19901SDG6_SR2018_web_3.pdf).

12. UN-Water, WHO and other United Nations sister organizations have also invited MDG+ counterparts to participate in several capacity-building activities and provided them with technical assistance on SDG 6 indicator methodologies to support the preparation of national reports. This was evident at the WHO Regional Workshop on Monitoring Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 6.1-6.3 Indicators (Amman, 24-26 July 2018), which ESCWA also attended. During the meeting, representatives from health ministries and statistical agencies were advised to form national monitoring teams that include water ministries and utilities to collect wastewater-related data, in complementarity with the MDG+ approach to data coordination.

Recommendation (d)

Support member States' efforts in ensuring that water-related regional priorities are respected in global, regional and national follow-up mechanisms for the 2030 Agenda, and in implementing the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Measures taken

13. ESCWA organized five regional preparatory meetings and consultations on water, environment, energy and climate change prior to the 2018 and 2019 Arab Forums for Sustainable Development, as detailed under Recommendation (e) below. ESCWA also provided advisory support to member States to better understand SDG6 indicator methodologies through bilateral communications and workshops.

14. With respect to the Paris Agreement, ESCWA continued to support member States to prepare and follow up on climate change negotiations. This included organizing the eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries with the League of Arab States and in collaboration with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNESCO in Beirut (10-13 April 2017); Cairo (9-12 October 2017); Kuwait (3-5 April 2018); Cairo (13-15 November 2018) and Beirut (7-8 April 2019). These workshops examined issues for negotiations as well as access to technology and finance to meet Paris Agreement commitments.

15. To help bridge understanding on parallel processes being pursued under the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework, the *ESCWA Water Development Report 7: Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction in the Arab Region (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2017/3)* examines differences and opportunities for coherence across the two agendas. ESCWA also organized in partnership with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) an Expert Group Meeting on Coordinating Responses to Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction in the Arab Region (Beirut, 19-20 December 2017) and a National Workshop on Sendai Framework Monitor and National Disaster Loss Accounting System and Linkage of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction for Iraq (Beirut, 18-21 December 2018), at the request of the Ministry of Health and Environment of Iraq and the national committee for disaster risk reduction of Iraq.

16. With respect to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Water Resources Section is examining access to climate finance for Arab States. A technical report on climate finance has been drafted and its findings discussed during the Regional Consultation on Climate Change for the 2019 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development and High-level Political Forum (Beirut, 21-22 March 2019), the twelfth Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries (Beirut, 7-8 April 2019) and with the Climate Finance Policy and Analysis Unit at the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat. Following further consultations, the report will be issued in 2019.

Recommendation (e)

Urge member States to effectively participate in preparatory activities for the 2018 and 2019 sessions of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, both focusing on SDGs 6 and 13.

Measures taken

17. ESCWA organized with the League of Arab States and several regional partners the following five preparatory meetings on water and climate change-related issues for the 2018 and 2019 sessions of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development and High-level Political Forum:

- Preparatory Meeting on the Regional Environmental Issues and Priorities for the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development and High-level Political Forum (Beirut, 23-24 April 2017);
- Arab Preparatory Meeting on Energy related Issues for the 2018 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development and High-level Political Forum (Beirut, 27-28 March 2018);
- Regional Preparatory Meeting on Water Issues for the 2018 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and High-level Political Forum (Beirut, 28-29 March 2018);
- Arab Preparatory Meeting on Environmental and Natural Resources Issues for the 2018 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development and High-level Political Forum (Cairo, 11-12 April 2018);
- Regional Consultation on Climate Change for the 2019 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and High-level Political Forum (Beirut, 21-22 March 2019).

18. Each meeting resulted in a consensus outcome document that was submitted to the subsequent Arab Forum for Sustainable Development and included in its meeting report as part of the regional submission to the High-level Political Forum.

Recommendation (f)

Support the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development” 2018-2028, and finance member State participation in its activities; and ensure progress in achieving the water-related SDGs.

Measures taken

19. ESCWA is a member of the UN-Water Water Action Decade Task Force and contributed to the preparation of the Secretary-General’s Plan: Water Action Decade 2018-2028, which was released on 22 March 2018. Support to member States under the plan entails four work streams: (a) facilitating access to knowledge and the exchange of good practices; (b) improving knowledge generation and dissemination, including new information relevant to water-related SDGs; (c) pursuing advocacy, networking and promoting partnerships and action; and (d) strengthening communication actions for implementation of the water-related goals. Reporting to the ESCWA Committee on Water Resources regarding the Decade and its launch is specifically referenced in the Secretary-General’s plan under work stream (c). Member State statements in support of the Decade have been already issued by Egypt, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates and are available at www.wateractiondecade.org.

20. The Regional Preparatory Meeting on Water Issues for the 2018 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and High-level Political Forum (Beirut, 28-29 March 2018) announced the launching of the International Decade for Action. Members of the ESCWA Committee on Water Resources as well as representatives from national institutions engaged in achieving the water-related SDGs participated in the meeting. ESCWA support to members States on integrated water resources management, the water-energy-

food security nexus, shared water resources management and climate change supports the achievement of water-related goals, as called for by the Water Action Decade. ESCWA is also engaged in regional preparations for the mid-point comprehensive review of the Decade, which will culminate with a global conference at United Nations Headquarters in New York (22- 23 March 2023).

Recommendation (g)

Provide technical support in the field of non-conventional water, including water desalination, rainwater harvesting and wastewater treatment and reuse, and transfer the experiences of some Arab countries in this area.

Measures taken

21. In addition to the activities on water supply, sanitation and wastewater reuse reported upon under Recommendation (c), ESCWA participated in the First Expert Group Meeting on Water and Sanitation Utilities in Water-scarce Cities in the MENA region (Abu Dhabi, 17 January 2019) organized by the UN-Habitat Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance (GWOPA) and the Ministry of Energy of the United Arab Emirates to discuss the formulation of a regional initiative for water and sanitation utilities in water-scarce cities in the MENA region. The ESCWA-led training manual on *Developing Capacities for Climate Change Adaptation by Applying Integrated Water Resource Management Tools*, launched at the High-level Meeting on Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation in September 2017, includes a module on "Climate Change Adaptation in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Using Integrated Water Resources Management Tools", issued with ACSAD and GIZ, and module on "Climate Change Adaptation in Human Settlements Using Integrated Water Resources Management Tools", prepared by ESCWA in consultation with ACWUA, which provide technical tools and lessons learned from the region on the application of rainwater harvesting schemes and wastewater management under changing climate conditions.

Recommendation (h)

Continue providing technical and financial support to member States to promote regional efforts on the water-energy-food nexus;

Recommendation (i)

Select a pilot project on the water-energy nexus and refer to the successful experiences of developed countries in its implementation.

Measures taken

22. In addition to the toolkits and workshops reported upon under Recommendation (a), ESCWA supported three pilot projects on the water-energy nexus under the UNDA project on Developing the Capacity of ESCWA Member Countries to Address the Water-Energy Nexus for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals. The following three pilots were selected and implemented based on proposals jointly submitted by members of the ESCWA Committee on Water Resources and ESCWA Energy Committee:

- Photovoltaic Solar System for Water Pumping (Moghra Oasis, Egypt);
- Use of Photovoltaic Solar Systems for Groundwater Pumping (Suwayda, Syrian Arab Republic);
- Improving Energy Consumption in Hydraulic Systems (Kairouan, Tunisia).

23. The pilot projects were implemented with the support of ESCWA technical advisors. The Société Nationale d'Exploitation et de Distribution des Eaux (SONEDE) of Tunisia was able to secure financing to implement a hydroelectric microturbine investment that reduces energy costs associated with water pumping based on the pilot project's outcomes.

24. ESCWA also continues to support the Arab Initiative on the Energy-Water-Food Nexus in the Arab Region, adopted by the Arab Ministerial Water Council and the Arab Ministerial Council for Electricity, within the framework of activities it conducts under the Promoting Food and Water Security in the Arab Region project, which ESCWA implements with financial support provided by Sida. This project supported the organization of the first joint meeting of water and agricultural ministries under the auspices of the League of Arab States in Cairo on 4 April 2019. ESCWA also contributed significantly to the preparation and implementation of the Land and Water Days (Cairo, 31 March – 4 April 2019) led by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which featured the RICCAR Regional Knowledge Hub data portal and the launch of nine crop-specific country case studies on the impact of climate change and water availability on agricultural productivity that draw upon the RICCAR regional climate modelling outputs when applying AquaCrop. Numerous requests have been received from and provided to member States and regional institutions for RICCAR's geospatial datasets, which are being used to inform water, agriculture and environment-related development planning and project studies. These include recent requests from Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia.

25. ESCWA also advised member States on the Commission's water-energy-food security nexus approach for achieving sustainable development with the context of advancing water security in the region at the Thirteenth Gulf Water Conference (Kuwait, 12-14 March 2019) and the Oman Energy and Water Conference on Addressing the Energy-Water Nexus through Integrated Approaches and Regional Cooperation (Muscat, 22-24 April 2019).

Recommendation (j)

Launch initiatives to build trust between Arab countries that share water resources and focus on the benefits of cooperation;

Recommendation (k)

Support member States in taking into account legal frameworks that promote countries' goals at the basin and national levels;

Recommendation (l)

Provide technical support and build capacity at the regional, bilateral and basin levels in the field of shared water resource management and related negotiations, and in international water law.

Measures taken

26. In addition to the technical materials reported upon under Recommendation (a), ESCWA organized two expert group meetings in partnership with the League of Arab States to foster mutual understanding and support regional exchange among Arab States on a common set of guidelines for supporting shared water resource management in the Arab region. These efforts included commissioning an international water law expert to support these consultations and organizing two expert group meetings, namely the:

- Expert Group Meeting on Pursuing Improved Shared Water Resources Management within the Framework of Global and Regional Agreements (Cairo, 29-30 November 2017);
- Expert Group Meeting on Improving Shared Water Resources Cooperation within the Framework of Global and Regional Agreements (Beirut, 6-7 December 2018).

27. The first day of these meetings examined opportunities and challenges for cooperation on shared water resources taking into consideration the Arab region particularities. The second day consisted of closed sessions with dedicated discussions on the draft guidance principles for shared water cooperation in the region.

Recommendation (m)

Build capacity to adopt a methodology for measuring water-related indicators in the 2030 Agenda and to incorporate the SDGs in national sustainable development plans, especially sectoral plans to strengthen linkages between the water sector and other development sectors.

Measures taken

28. Regional concerns related to the water-related SDGs in the 2030 Agenda were discussed during the Regional Preparatory Meeting on Water Issues for the 2018 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development and High-level Political Forum (Beirut, 28-29 March 2018). Discussion of SDG 6.1 6.2, 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 targets and indicators were discussed, as well as an ESCWA working paper on water security which includes a conceptual framework for advancing progress on the 2030 Agenda. During the meeting, FAO also presented a draft working paper on an SDG 6.4.3 indicator methodology based on inter-agency discussions taken within the framework of the United Nations-League of States Sector Meeting on Water (Cairo, October 2017) and UN-Water Senior Programme Manager discussions (Stockholm, August 2017), where ESCWA had encouraged work to develop such an indicator. However, it must be noted that the United National Statistical Commission has decided to hold off on adopting new indicators for the time being.

29. With respect to SDG 6.5, ESCWA prepared two working papers on SDG 6.5.2 related to shared water resources in 2017 and 2018 as reported on in Recommendation (a). ESCWA also prepared and circulated for comment and input in 2018 a working paper informing a Regional Report for SDG indicator 6.5.1 on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) implementation in collaboration with the UNEP-DHI Centre on Water and Environment in Denmark. The report draws upon the global database for SDG 6.5.1 available with DHI and complements it with input and insights from the Arab region. Consultations on the report's figures were undertaken with Arab Governments as well as members of the Arab Integrated Water Resources Management Network (AWARENET). The report will be issued in 2019. Support for SDG 6.5.1 and SDG 6.5.2 reports in 2018 was provided by Sida as a final set of activities implemented under the MDG+ Initiative.

30. With respect to SDG 11, ESCWA collaborated with UNDRR to organize a National Workshop on Sendai Framework Monitor and National Disaster Loss Accounting System and Linkage of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction for Iraq (Beirut, 18-21 December 2018). The seventh *ESCWA Water Development Report* (2017) also provides a framework for supporting coherence across sustainable development indicators related to disaster risk reduction and natural hazards and those related to climate change.

31. With respect to SDG 13, ESCWA provided a range of support to member States to build their capacity for climate change negotiations on water-related issues including, adaptation, co-benefits of adaptation and mitigation, finance, technology transfer and agriculture through five Regional Training Workshops on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries between April 2017 and April 2019 in collaboration with regional partners. ESCWA has also been providing through the RICCAR Regional Knowledge Hub regional training, technical assistance and datasets to support country and crop focused analysis to assist countries generate a scientific basis for informing their national development policies and plans.

32. The eighth edition of the ESCWA Water Development Report will be issued in 2019 and focuses on the water-related SDGs. It will also introduce innovative approaches to cope with water scarcity at the regional and national levels by integrating SDGs targets and goals with the regional action plans and national water resources strategy measures and by developing the required institutional setups to achieve this integration.

Recommendation (n)

Confirm the publication of a 2017 climate change evaluation report in coordination with partner organizations in RICCAR.

Measures taken

33. The RICCAR Arab Climate Change Assessment Report: Main Report ([E/ESCWA/SDPD/2017/RICCAR/Report](#)) and Arab Climate Change Assessment Report: Technical Annex ([E/ESCWA/SDPD/2017/RICCAR/Annex](#)) were launched at the High-level Meeting on Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation (Beirut, 26-28 September 2017), along with a publication series comprised of technical notes, technical reports and training materials. They are available at: www.riccar.org.

Recommendation (o)

Provide additional financial resources to support the regional knowledge hub and knowledge resources in line with regional needs to direct policies and research on climate change evaluation and adaptation;

Recommendation (p)

Support Arab institutions and researchers in preparing scientific studies and conducting peer reviews thereon to raise global awareness on the climate change challenges facing Arab countries, by providing scientific material for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Measures taken

34. The RICCAR Regional Knowledge Hub (RKH) consists of two interlinked and complementary components: (a) a website and (b) a data portal. ESCWA is responsible for the website component and hired a website developer in November 2017 for its design and development. The Regional Knowledge Hub website was launched in June 2018 (www.riccar.org). A communication expert was hired in January 2019 to complete the population of RICCAR website, update the Content Management System and prepare a report on website visitor traffic metrics. Statistics regarding the website traffic demonstrated considerable interest in the RICCAR activities and documentation disseminated through the RKH.

35. Regular exchanges between ESCWA and the FAO team were pursued to finalize the RKH data portal. This resulted in the launch of the data portal component of RKH accessible through www.riccar.org and <https://rkh.apps.fao.org> in April 2019.

36. Based on requests, ESCWA has provided high resolution maps, climate and hydrological data files and modelling projections outcomes to water-related ministries, universities and research institutions in the Arab region. The scientific material was used to inform climate-related scientific analysis at the national and local levels. The research generated will highlight climate change challenges facing the Arab region.

37. In response to requests from concerned ministries in Lebanon and Egypt, ESCWA, in collaboration with ACSAD, organized national training workshops on the Application of Climate Change Impact and Vulnerability Assessments for the Ministry of Agriculture in Lebanon (Beirut, 26-30 November 2018) and the National Water Research Centre of the Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (Cairo, 11-15 March 2018).

38. Additional requests for trainings on GIS applications for climate change analysis were received from Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries, Tunisia; the North African Young Water Professional Network, Egypt; the Ministry of Agriculture, Iraq; the University of Aden, Yemen; the International Relations

Unit, Palestine and the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Jordan. These are planned for implementation during the third and fourth quarter of 2019.

Recommendation (q)

Assist countries in developing strategic plans to tackle climate change by determining priorities in this field, and organize regional capacity-building workshops, focusing on the importance of technology transfer, capacity-building and awareness-raising;

Recommendation (r)

Assist member States, upon their request, in the preparation of climate change project proposals for submission to donors in order to obtain the necessary funding for implementation.

Measures taken

39. Based on the appreciation of ESCWA member State support for the services delivered by ESCWA in the area of climate change, the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies was established at ESCWA subsequent to ESCWA Ministerial Session resolution 329 (XXX) adopted in June 2018. Since its establishment, over two dozen capacity-building activities on climate change were delivered by ESCWA and are reported upon in the parliamentary document on the Centre submitted under item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda of this thirteenth session of the ESCWA Committee on Water Resources. This includes the Regional Consultation on Climate Change for the 2019 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development (AFSD) and High-level Political Forum (Beirut, 21-22 March 2019) and its resulting Outcome Document, which included climate finance as a strategic area of focus, as well as associated input to the AFSD, which helped to determine regional priorities for addressing climate change in the region.

40. Four capacity development activities on climate change were also delivered to member States prior to the establishment of the Centre and since the twelfth session of the Committee, including Regional Training Workshops on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries (Beirut, 10-13 April 2017; Rabat, Cairo, 9-12 October 2017, Kuwait, 3-5 April 2018), and two following the establishment of the Centre (Cairo, 13-15 November 2018; Beirut, 7-8 April 2019). The workshops were organized at the request of the Arab Group of climate change negotiators and in cooperation with the League of Arab States, UNEP and UNESCO. The workshop in Kuwait was also conducted in partnership with the Organization for Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC). These meetings provided training on climate finance and technology transfer, as well as updates on the status of Arab countries' engagement with the Green Climate Fund. In complementarity with these workshops, ESCWA also contributed to the Workshop on the Preparedness Project of the Green Climate Fund for Iraq (10-12 June 2018).

41. RICCAR-related training, technical assistance and datasets were provided through the Regional Knowledge Hub and with the support of a Regional Advisor for Geographic Information System Tools for Climate Change Analysis who was recruited in 2019. This included a series of training workshops requested and delivered to the Water Resource Research Institute of the National Water Resources Centre of the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation of Egypt (Cairo, 11-15 March 2018); Ministry of Agriculture of Lebanon (Beirut, 26-30 November 2018), for Lebanese and Syrian officials (Beirut, 26-28 March 2019) and at the request of the Higher Planning Council and Oman Water Society (Muscat, October 2018 and April 2019).

42. ESCWA is implementing the project on Promoting Food and Water Security through Cooperation and Capacity Development in the Arab Region funded by Sida under which capacity-building is being provided to support analysis of the impacts of climate change and changing water availability on agricultural productivity in Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, the Sudan, Tunis and Yemen.

Recommendation (s)

Prepare a programme to train national trainers in the field of integrated water resource management and climate change adaptation, and to prepare research proposals.

Measures taken

43. A training manual on Developing the Capacities of Arab Countries for Climate Change Adaptation by Applying Integrated Water Resource Management Tools was launched at the High-level Meeting on Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation (Beirut, 26-28 September 2019). Prepared in collaboration with regional partners, the manual includes an introductory chapter and a set of five stand-alone modules focused on agriculture, environment, health, human settlements and economic development which are most likely to be affected by climate change impacts on the water sector. Information on the training materials is also available in a booklet on Developing the Capacities of the Arab Countries for Climate Change Adaptation Using Integrated Water Resource Management Tools ([E/ESCWA/SDPD/2017/BOOKLET.2](#)). These training materials are available on the RICCAR Regional Knowledge Hub under the Regional Knowledge Node on Adaptation.

44. In addition to technical resources provided during training workshops and expert group meetings, technical assistance and datasets for supporting integrated water resources management and climate assessments that support climate change adaptation were also provided to the following government institutions since March 2017: Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (Egypt), Ministry of Water and Irrigation (Jordan), Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (Kuwait), Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Environment (Lebanon), Libyan National Meteorological Centre (Libya), Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (Saudi Arabia) and Ministry of Agriculture (Tunisia). Additional information and datasets to support climate change adaptation has also been requested from and provided to partners and regional organizations, including UNDRR (Egypt), UNEP (Kenya), Hassan II University of Casablanca (Morocco), Mohamed VI Polytechnical University (Morocco), International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (Egypt), Climate Media Factory (Germany), and others.
