

327 (XXIX) Working mechanisms of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to resolution 314 (XXVIII) on the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, adopted at its twenty-eighth session held in Tunis from 15 to 18 September 2014,

Referring also to General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”,

Referring also to resolution 322 adopted at the second meeting of its Executive Committee, held in Amman from 14 to 16 December 2015, on the ESCWA plan of action to support member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Taking note of the key outcomes of the 2016 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, held in Amman on 29 and 30 May 2016, on the future working mechanisms of the Forum,¹

1. *Affirms* the important role of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development as a regional platform where stakeholders can address sustainable development issues from an integrated perspective, consider formulations, frameworks and follow-up and review mechanisms for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and contribute to building a unified position on the opportunities and challenges of achieving sustainable development in the Arab region;

2. *Invites* presentations of national and regional experiences in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including voluntary national reports on progress in this regard, at the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development to exchange expertise, experiences and lessons learned;

3. *Endorses* the annexed terms of reference, which organize the working mechanisms of the Forum in a manner that guarantees its effectiveness and success in strengthening regional cooperation and coordination to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Annex

Arab Forum on Sustainable Development Terms of Reference

Aim of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development aims to stimulate and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to establish follow-up and review frameworks and mechanisms in the Arab region as follows:

- Provide a platform to discuss transnational issues from a perspective that takes into account integration between sectors and that targets government and non-government organizations, including civil society organizations, the private sector, parliaments and think tanks;

¹ ESCWA, Report of the 2016 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development (E/ESCWA/SDD/2016/WG.1/Report).

- Encourage Arab countries to translate their commitments to the principles and Goals of the 2030 Agenda into integrated strategies, programmes and policies that promote positive interactions between Goals and targets;
- Determine common regional goals and emerging challenges, and promote consistency between national development plans and strategies and regional priorities;
- Strengthen regional and international cooperation to implement, follow up and review the 2030 Agenda, including cooperation between Arab countries and trilateral cooperation, and identify methods to finance development and build strong partnerships between countries and across regions based on peer learning and the exchange of expertise and best practices;
- Assist in mobilizing the necessary implementation methods to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, including the development of statistical systems, science, research, technology and innovation;
- Encourage Arab States to conduct voluntary national reviews in line with guidelines set out in the 2030 Agenda, and submit them to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;
- Establish a network of practitioners to prepare voluntary national reviews, aimed at assisting member States to exchange expertise and lessons learned and to strengthen their capacity to prepare reports and related documents.

Venue of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Arab Forum is held at the headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Beirut. Any Arab State can submit a request to host the Forum to the secretariat for approval subject to the facilities and technical and financial support the hosting State can provide to facilitate the Forum's work and organization.

Date and frequency of the sessions of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Forum is convened annually (or according to necessity) at least three to four months prior to the holding of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, so as to allow sufficient time for the preparation of the report. The Arab Forum is held concurrently with other regional forums organized by the United Nations regional commissions.

Secretariat of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

ESCWA fulfils the role of the Forum's secretariat. The Forum is organized by a joint committee comprising ESCWA, the League of Arab States and United Nations regional coordination mechanisms.

Participants at the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Forum is attended by representatives of Arab Governments and governmental and non-governmental regional organizations, civil society, academic institutions, the private sector, parliaments and related financial institutions, including regional development banks, so as to ensure partnerships, integrated roles, interaction and cooperation between sustainable development stakeholders in the Arab region.

Agenda of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The secretariat determines the Forum's agenda based on proposals by the joint committee. Agenda items are consistent with development priorities in Arab countries and with issues under consideration by the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The agenda may also contain items on initial presentations of voluntary national reports, before submission to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Input of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Forum provides an opportunity to discuss several regional and national reports and scientific papers on development in the Arab region and on progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the regional level, in line with agreed goals and targets.

The Forum also provides the opportunity to review the outcomes of various regional meetings on the 2030 Agenda and its Goals and targets. The Forum's agenda may contain presentations on the key outcomes of the following:

- (a) Arab ministerial councils and ESCWA subcommittees concerned with development, including those specializing in specific Goals of the 2030 Agenda;
- (b) Regional conferences on the 2030 Agenda, especially those organized under the regional coordination mechanism;
- (c) Regional events on various related issues, such as financing development, technology and statistics, and events that highlight the operationalization of partnerships with parliaments, civil society organizations, the private sector and universities.

Outcomes of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Forum issues a summary report submitted to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development as part of regional contributions to the follow-up on the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. Its outcomes are also presented to the ESCWA ministerial session and its Executive Committee and to the Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States and related Arab ministerial councils.

8th plenary meeting
15 December 2016