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2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: ESCWA strategy and plan of action

Summary

The present document sets out the proposed strategy and plan of action of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

The objective of this paper is to show how the work and organizational structure of ESCWA may be altered to support member States in integrating the 2030 Agenda into their national development frameworks to ensure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab region.

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I. THE REGIONAL DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by world leaders at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, held in New York in from 25 to 27 September 2015, sets out a pivotal role for the regional dimension of development. Increasingly, regional and subregional groupings of countries are identifying solutions to their common development challenges, and regional institutions are being called upon to work collectively with member States to develop regional strategies and approaches, not only on cross-border issues, but also on more traditional issues of economic and social development.
2. The United Nations regional commissions have been singled out as uniquely providing neutral intergovernmental platforms where agreements and actions on regional integration, regional standards and norm setting, exchange of experiences and South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation can be achieved. Four outcome documents of key United Nations events and three General Assembly resolutions clearly and explicitly call upon the regional commissions to advocate for and contribute to supporting member States in regional development.

II. ROLLING-OUT THE 2030 AGENDA IN THE ARAB REGION

3. The adoption of the 2013 Agenda for Sustainable Development in all its integral parts, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, will close the design phase initiated in 2012. Since the September 2015 Summit, member States have been engaged in a process to adopt, align and integrate the 2030 Agenda into their national development frameworks, action plans and sector strategies. The period 2016-2017 will be critical as member States identify ways and means to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) in their institutional structures, implementation plans and budgets. This State-led response trajectory will be made up of at least four distinct phases: adoption; alignment and adaptation; implementation; and follow-up and review.

III. ESCWA PREPARATION AND SUPPORT FOR THE 2030 AGENDA

4. Given the clear and direct mandates on the regional dimension of sustainable development in integration, consensus-building, capacity-building, knowledge generation, monitoring and follow-up and review, ESCWA must continue to provide strategic support to member States. In advocating for the 2030 Agenda, ESCWA interventions will include a comprehensive and mutually reinforcing package of normative, technical and capacity-building initiatives from the moment of adoption in September 2015. These will include support to adaptation, planning, implementation, data collection and analysis, monitoring and follow-up and review.

A. ACCOMPANYING THE REGION ON THE ROAD TO THE 2030 AGENDA

5. As the regional arm of the United Nations in the Arab region, ESCWA has accompanied member States through a process of consultation, prioritization and consensus building on sustainable development. Following initial support to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012, ESCWA launched the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the League of Arab States, holding high-level consultative annual meetings in April 2014 and May 2015 that fed into the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.
6. The Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development provided a platform to discuss regional priorities on sustainable development, resulting in input that has helped shape ministerial declarations on Arab priorities for the post-2015 development agenda. It also initiated a dialogue on the future steps for SDG monitoring and evaluation and the institutional frameworks required for adequate planning, implementation,

review and reporting at the regional level, as well as providing the space to review issues relating to means of implementation and positioning on climate change negotiations.

7. Through its intergovernmental meetings on finance, ESCWA provided a platform to support regional preparations for the third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa in July 2015. These meetings resulted in a set of recommendations to member States and ESCWA on ways to mobilize national and international financing for sustainable development. Within the context of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM), ESCWA was invited in July 2015 to join the United Nations interagency task team on science, technology and innovation for the SDGs, which will be responsible for preparing the yearly meetings of the multistakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the SDGs, as well as the development of the TFM online platform.

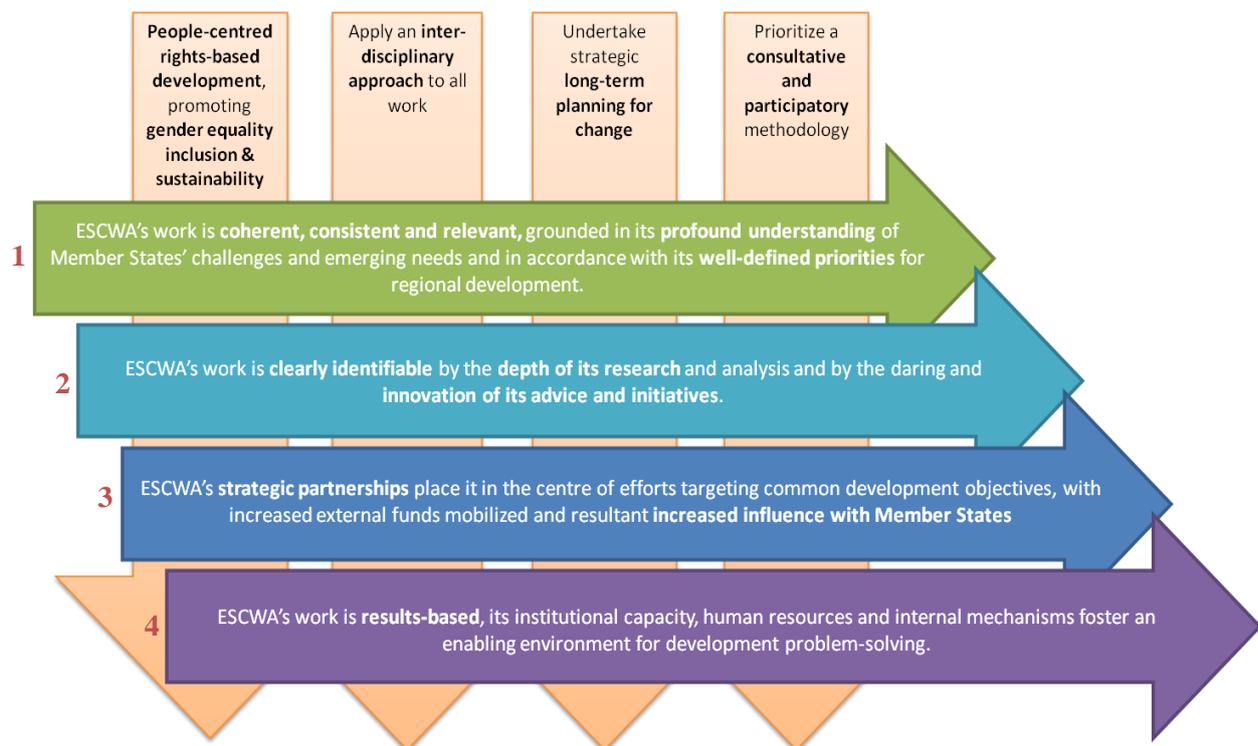
8. ESCWA has also undertaken a leading role in the development of a regional strategic framework and action plan for the implementation of the Cairo Declaration on the Post-2015 Development Agenda for Women, adopted by member States at the 2014 interministerial meeting of the League of Arab States.

9. ESCWA has also supported Arab countries to critically examine indicators and assessment tools related to water and climate change, by launching a regional monitoring mechanism and issuing annual reports on water supply and sanitation indicators with the League of Arab States, which substantively and institutionally position Arab countries to better achieve water-related targets through the MDG+ Initiative, and by developing a regional knowledge base for assessment, adaptation and mitigation to address climate change.

B. INTERNAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2030 AGENDA: ESCWA PROGRAMME VISION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

10. Over the past year, and through a process of participatory consultations, ESCWA has developed tools and approaches to ensure that it is true to its vision as a creative, cutting-edge and connected organization rooted in the Arab region, and that its strategic approach to programmes is coherent, consistent, relevant and aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. On the basis of this vision, ESCWA confirms that it will seek to create greater synergy and mutually reinforce linkages across its following three core areas: voice of the region: creating regional consensus building; think tank of the region: by undertaking innovative research and forward-looking analysis; and advisor to the region: by providing regional, subregional and national policy advice and advocacy. To achieve its vision, ESCWA has defined four goals (goals 1 and 2 are external; goals 3 and 4 are internal) and four cross-cutting values as set out in figure 1.

11. The SDGs are universal in character, based on shared responsibility in their achievement, and adopt an inter-related and mutually dependent approach to tackling social, economic, environmental and governance issues: the achievement of some goals will affect the achievement of others. By operationalizing the ESCWA programme vision and conceptual framework for the 2030 Development Agenda, ESCWA will establish an integrated approach to development challenges in sectors that are clearly interlinked and where changes in one sector impact changes in others. The ESCWA integrated approach will focus on challenges that highlight cross-sectoral interactions, facilitate integrated planning and decision-making, and inform the allocation of resources between competing needs. In terms of analysis, the approach will combine quantitative and qualitative assessments to identify key trade-offs between policy goals and resource use, but will also seek to identify synergies and possible win-win scenarios.

Figure 1. ESCWA vision: goals and values

Source: ESCWA compilation.

C. COORDINATING INTER-REGIONAL CONSENSUS FOR A HARMONIZED APPROACH TO THE 2030 AGENDA BY REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

12. The five regional commissions are collectively articulating new strategies and action plans to prioritize support to member States in cooperation with the United Nations development system. Through a process of consultation, they have defined key areas of intervention that reflect their shared emphases and harmonized approach. These areas are summarized as follows:

1. *Integrating SDGs into national development planning and fiscal frameworks*

13. ESCWA will continue to help member States translate global commitments into regional transformative strategies and agendas by driving the integration of sustainability and inclusivity considerations in national policies, plans, programmes and budgets, and by piloting the implementation of better integrated governance and delivery models.

14. Member States and intergovernmental meetings have mandated ESCWA to support the implementation of sustainable development by promoting integration of the SDGs into plans, models and fiscal frameworks, assisting in the understanding and analysis of cross-cutting and emerging issues, and providing support to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development.

15. Based on its interdisciplinary structure, ESCWA will tap into its in-house macro and sector research and analytical capacities, wide-ranging expert and multistakeholder networks and long experience in developing methodologies and operationalizing models to drive integrated implementation and delivery of development with member States, in collaboration with United Nations country teams. It will also offer capacity-building for the development of macroeconomic frameworks to mainstream the development agenda, among other things.

16. ESCWA will work to standardize integrated models, identify best practices and share methodologies and knowledge with the wider United Nations development system. This will facilitate harmonization of integration approaches, enable inter-regional comparability and foster the exchange of best practices and lessons learned.

2. Promoting policy coherence, consistency and coordination

17. The functional structure of ESCWA is well-suited to providing countries with “one-stop shops” for policy advice to facilitate integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, offering technical cooperation to implement the SDGs and operationalizing their means of implementation at the regional, subregional and country levels.

18. Two iterations of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development in 2014 and 2015 have helped to institutionalize these intergovernmental mechanisms, which will serve as the primary regional platforms for cohesive and coordinated implementation of the 2030 Agenda. By means of the Arab Forum, ESCWA will facilitate member State consensus on regional road maps for implementing the SDGs, producing regional annual reports, conducting peer review mechanisms, setting norms, and examining opportunities to strengthen national institutional frameworks for coordinated implementation of the SDGs.

19. ESCWA intergovernmental meetings will support the Arab Forum, which will also focus on nurturing policy coherence and consistency between the global and regional levels, so as to exploit interdependence and linkages across subject areas. ESCWA knowledge products and expert networks will reinforce these linkages through the exchange of best practices, including through South-South and triangular cooperation between regions or different country groupings, the data revolution/statistics, the interface between science and policy, domestic resource mobilization, tax cooperation as mandated, and technology and innovation.

3. Enhancing data and statistical capacities of member States to implement the 2030 Agenda

20. The ESCWA Statistical Committee, led by the heads of national statistical offices and backed by the ESCWA Statistics Division, provides a holistic institutional framework to steer the regional statistical development agenda. ESCWA will support member States in developing statistical data and capacities, as well as in collecting, analysing, disseminating and communicating this data for SDG implementation. Part of this effort entails leveraging the Statistical Committee to ensure that the programmes developed are demand-driven; in other words, backed by strong country ownership through national statistical offices.

21. ESCWA is assessing data and statistical gaps in SDG measurement, strengthening data ecosystems, offering policy advice, assisting in statistics modernization, promoting environmental accounting through mainstreaming and integration, and managing technical cooperation programmes for building capacities in data and indicators. Data and statistical enhancement will be critical to the regional follow-up and review mandates for the 2030 Agenda.

22. ESCWA is well positioned to address emerging challenges and needs, support data requirements for early warning systems, examine ways to reduce the costs of statistical production and generate higher frequency data.

4. Identifying and promoting alternative and innovative sources of financing for development

23. In addition to convening regional consultations on financing for development, with support from ministries of finance, central banks, regional development institutions and regional think tanks, ESCWA has produced reports, analyses and policy advice for member States on alternative and innovative sources of financing, and perspectives on the necessary regional architecture for financing for development.

24. Under the mandates received, ESCWA will go beyond research and peer-learning to experience-sharing and capacity-building to promote domestic resource mobilization, including tax reforms, capital market development and international tax cooperation. ESCWA will also engage with countries to improve enabling environments for trade and finance flows; develop approaches to the challenges of middle-income countries; and promote public-private partnerships.

5. Leveraging science, technology and innovation in support of the 2030 Agenda

25. ESCWA has promoted regional platforms and initiatives for science, technology and innovation (STI). The ESCWA Technology for Development Division and the ESCWA Technology Centre engage member States and promote concrete STI initiatives.

26. The regional commissions will also work to leverage advanced regional STI hubs to offer best practices and share their experience in STI policymaking, standard-setting and the creation of legislation to nurture knowledge-sharing on sustainable technologies and promote connectivity and cutting-edge digital technology, among other things.

27. Furthermore, recognizing that the most severe impacts of climate variability and change are expected to be felt in the decades ahead, ESCWA will continue supporting member States in building resilience to these impacts.

6. Tapping South-South and regional partnerships

28. ESCWA has proactively harnessed South-South cooperation both within and beyond the Arab region. Going forward, existing initiatives and new proposals will be further deliberated at the intergovernmental and sectoral committee levels. This will involve building on established relationships and evolving partnerships for further research, identification of policy tools and incentive frameworks, best practice and knowledge sharing, and gearing regional institutes to further reinforce the work of the commissions. The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and the SDG annual regional reports will detail regional progress in these areas.

7. Translating regional models into global public goods

29. ESCWA has produced many SDG-related outputs, such as legally binding intergovernmental agreements, norms and standards, and good practice guidelines including for transport, environment, sustainable development and statistics. These products have strong political credibility as they have already been endorsed through intergovernmental processes, ensuring ownership of the agendas by member States. Such products respond well to the development needs of the region and can act as models for similar approaches in other regions; in many cases they have become global public goods available for all United Nations member States and used increasingly all over the world.

D. ESCWA AREAS OF STRENGTH AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

30. **Regional expertise:** as the United Nations regional arm, ESCWA is rooted in the region and understands its priorities and challenges. ESCWA is already experienced in addressing regional concerns and challenges in a comprehensive manner and can prioritize regionally specific issues sometimes overlooked by the global agenda, such as occupation, migration and conflict, among other things.

31. **Institutionally interdisciplinary:** the 2030 Agenda, with its interdependent goals and targets, requires an interdisciplinary approach to understanding and addressing development issues. The ESCWA seven subprogrammes house a wealth of normative, technical and analytical capacity, ensuring interdisciplinary responses to complex issues. Moreover, each of the subprogrammes is well positioned to monitor trends

related to goals and targets within their area of specialty and to advise Governments on integrated policy options to achieve the SDGs.

32. **Convening at the regional level:** the adaptation, monitoring, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda will require regional consultations at multiple levels. As an intergovernmental organization with eight intergovernmental committees and a strategic partnership with the League of Arab States, ESCWA must maximize the use of its convening powers to become the key regional forum for consultation, knowledge exchange and consensus-building on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Much of this regional consultation is already in place: ESCWA leadership of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development has already created a multistakeholder platform to consolidate and represent the voice of the region at the global level; and, as the secretariat of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, ESCWA will convene regular consultations between United Nations development agencies, with the League of Arab States and international financial institutions, to deliberate progress towards the 2030 Agenda and coordinate regional policy and programme priorities.

33. **Technical expertise:** following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, many member States will require technical assistance in the adaptation of its goals and targets; the integration of the Agenda into national development plans while maintaining clear interdisciplinary linkages between different targets; the identification of baseline data; the undertaking of monitoring and reporting; and in the design of institutional mechanisms that support integration. ESCWA has a long history of providing expert support to member States at the national level, which will ensure its role in contextualizing Agenda goals and targets, and integrating these goals into national plans and actions.

34. **Expert data:** underpinning the 2030 Agenda is the ability to capture quality, reliable and disaggregated data. Reliable data will be key for countries to make evidence-based policy choices and monitor their progress. Through its Statistics Division, ESCWA can provide unique support to member States through national statistical offices to improve statistical standards in the collection, analysis and dissemination of data. At the regional level, ESCWA support in the harmonization of data through the design of regional surveys and the production of regular regional monitoring reports will be vital.

E. GOALS AND ENTRY POINTS OF THE ESCWA STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

35. Responding to the level of ambition of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the ESCWA strategy provides equally ambitious goals and entry points. The goals of the SDG strategy are in line with the ESCWA core areas: regional consensus, research and analysis, and technical cooperation. As with the three core areas, the three goals are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The cumulative effect will be to influence policy at the regional and national levels, and to deliver a coherent and clear message at the global level to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Figure 2. ESCWA strategy for implementing the 2030 Agenda

F. IMPLEMENTING THE ESCWA STRATEGY

36. Having identified the overall goals of the strategy and priority areas, the ESCWA implementation plan must be designed to ensure an integrated and coherent set of activities that, taken together, ensure that ESCWA interventions are effective and cumulative, leading to the attainment of the SDGs in the region. A first step will be to finalize the draft plan of action by making it comprehensive, clarifying linkages and the sequencing of outputs, and identifying responsible entities and resources. This will require consultations with all ESCWA divisions as part of the finalization of the 2016-2017 programme of work and the 2018-

2019 strategic framework. Nonetheless, it is possible to identify priority areas of intervention in the ESCWA strategy, as follows.

1. Prioritizing ESCWA interventions

37. By 2016, ESCWA will begin preparing a comprehensive set of knowledge products with direct relevance to the 2030 Agenda. Key among those will be the seven Horizon flagship reports planned for 2016-2017. The link between those reports and other knowledge products will need to be established. In addition, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals Indicators will propose a final global indicator framework by March 2016. Upon its launch, ESCWA will initiate a series of consultations and capacity-building activities aimed at adapting the global framework to the region, and at supporting member States to tailor it to their own needs. It also intends to issue a number of knowledge products on methodologies for measuring sustainable development targets, as well as statistical reports and demographic profiles that can provide a basis for other research. ESCWA will need to consider the source of the data used at the regional level, whether from national sources or United Nations entities. Regarding technical cooperation, ESCWA will initiate technical assistance to member States to provide support in the review and adaptation of the targets and their integration into national development plans.

2. Follow-up and review

38. In 2017, it is expected that ESCWA will be prepared to put in place its own mechanisms and processes for regional follow-up and review. This will require a full review of options to be discussed with both experts and stakeholders, in particular member State Governments and the League of Arab States. Simultaneously, ESCWA will need to initiate regional monitoring activities and the production of reports and assessments that can feed into the annual Secretary-General's reports as well as regional consultations and debates.

39. Regional follow-up and review will likely include a mix of horizontal and thematic reviews. At the horizontal level and building on national review processes, member States will meet regularly, including through the annual regional forums on sustainable development, to review progress, identify good practices, discuss common challenges and identify joint solutions and approaches. They will also consider regional and cross-border issues of priority for the region in an integrated and holistic manner. It is expected that, over the period 2016–2018, member States will focus their efforts on streamlining the SDGs in their development plans through the adoption and adaptation of the 2030 Agenda, and in the establishment of mechanisms for national monitoring and evaluation, among other things. Those years will also be important to review challenges related to data quality and statistics as the essential building blocks of a robust follow-up and review process at the national, regional and global levels. ESCWA intends to provide targeted advisory and capacity-building services to support member States in this regard, along with targeted support in integrating the SDGs into national development planning and fiscal frameworks. In the years that follow, member States will present their progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

40. Thematic reviews addressing regional priorities and emerging issues will also be carried out. The selection of themes should be in line with those identified globally at the High-level Political Forum. Thematic reviews should also mirror those of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, and will provide an opportunity to focus on specific sectors in an integrated manner so as to identify good practices, bottlenecks and policy recommendations. The regional follow-up and review will also necessarily seek to reduce the burdens of reporting on countries by ensuring synergy with other ongoing global and regional reviews, such as the International Conference on Population and Development, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations against Women, Beijing+20, Sustainable Energy for All, the World Summit on the Information Society, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and others.

41. To ensure synergy and coherence, the regional forums of sustainable development will be held in close collaboration with the secretariat of the League of Arab States and the Regional Coordination Mechanism, and with the participation of all 22 Arab countries.

42. ESCWA is also considering the establishment of a regional framework for sustainable development, custom-made for the region as a mechanism to monitor the 2030 Agenda. It is envisaged that such a framework would encourage the region to identify its own sustainable development targets and means of implementation, and would provide a basis for the region to assess its own progress, identify lessons learned, highlight common challenges and joint solutions, and promote peer learning. To become operational, the framework would require adoption by the League of Arab States, the Economic and Social Council and the Arab Economic and Social Development Summit. Designed to minimize additional burden on the resources of member States, the framework could include national SDG targets common to several countries, as well as SDG targets relating to regional priorities and to regional public goods targets. The framework could also include targets focused on the means of implementation, monitoring the region's commitment to itself in areas such as trade, financing for development, innovation, technology transfer and intraregional cooperation. This regional framework could build on the existing success of ESCWA in terms of the launch of the Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development and the Regional Sustainable Development Indicators Initiative. It is proposed that this framework be piloted at the subregional level, with a limited number of countries, before being introduced to the region as a whole.

3. Strategic partnerships and external relations

43. ESCWA has adopted a strategic approach to partnerships that promotes systematic and sustained collaboration around medium- to long-term development goals that are broad, regional in nature and represent a clear contribution to sustainable development in the region.

44. Through its intergovernmental bodies and its technical cooperation activities, ESCWA must strengthen partnerships with member State Governments to understand and influence the policy priorities of the region. In this regard, the League of Arab States, as the main regional political body, will be a key actor in building consensus and identifying regional approaches to cross-border challenges.

45. Under the Delivering as One framework, ESCWA will partner with the full range of United Nations entities. At the regional level, ESCWA will use the meetings of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) to chart the broad outlines of the United Nations policy and programme directions in response to the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore ESCWA, as chair of the RCM thematic working group on the post-2015 development agenda and the Task Force on Statistical Coordination, should develop detailed annual workplans with concrete outputs and coordination/contribution mechanisms, including the organization of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, the preparation of an Arab sustainable development report, the preparation of annual regional monitoring reports and the harmonization of statistics on the SDGs. At the national level, ESCWA technical cooperation support to member States will be coordinated directly with the relevant United Nations country teams to ensure coherence and synergy.

46. Partnerships with the private sector must also be sought as a means to access innovation and resources, by linking research and development outputs with industry and businesses. The 2030 Agenda has stressed the role of the private sector as a key partner for development. The private sector, through corporations, foundations and businesses, will be particularly important in fostering the implementation means of the Agenda, both through financial resources and the identification of innovation and environmentally friendly technologies.

4. Knowledge management as an enabler

47. The ESCWA knowledge management strategy responds to the Secretary-General's call for transforming the way the United Nations works, with particular focus on the 2030 Agenda. In addition to the

cross-cutting nature of knowledge management in all SDGs, goal 17 specifically addresses capacity development, data, monitoring and accountability, and ESCWA interventions in these areas could be supported through integrated knowledge management platforms and initiatives. The ESCWA strategy takes advantage of the organization's internal knowledge, generated by staff members and consultants, to develop and deliver high quality products and services to its beneficiaries. In particular, the strategy aims to support critical initiatives undertaken by the organization, while supporting a long-term need for enhanced and expanded knowledge-based services through a cross-divisional approach. One of the envisioned knowledge management activities is the development of a portal that enables the integration, aggregation and disaggregation of information and knowledge available on united knowledge management platforms. The portal design would aggregate existing information by country and SDG themes/clusters (such as ESCWA projects, meetings, missions and publications), while providing a collaboration space for knowledge generation and management. Staff development and training in the area of knowledge management would feed into the internal capacity development envisioned in the 2030 Agenda strategy.

48. Internal knowledge management initiatives, which aim to develop ESCWA products and services through enhanced knowledge generation, management and sharing, could be augmented further by using the ESCWA website as a means to deliver products and services to ultimate beneficiaries. Access to information and knowledge, as stipulated in the Lyon Declaration on Access to Information Development, is a critical prerequisite in planning for and implementing the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, the scope of knowledge management could be expanded to engage member States and partners, such as United Nations agencies and academia, directly in support of SDG implementation. The ESCWA knowledge management strategy will also take into account future knowledge management initiatives involving other regional commissions, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other United Nations agencies, in an effort to contribute to the One United Nations Initiative.

5. Resource mobilization

49. To undertake this ambitious programme of work, ESCWA will realign parts of its programme to ensure greater focus on sustainable development. Realignment alone, however, will not be enough to carry out the ambitious programme of work identified by the SDGs and the draft plan of action outlined below. Additional resources, including a mixture of regular budget, Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation, Development Account and extrabudgetary funds, will be required to allow ESCWA to address the new and direct mandates that have been confirmed through the 2015 Sustainable Development Summit declaration and resolution, as well as those mandates emanating from the Rio+20 resolution and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Of particular priority for ESCWA will be securing funds for the organization of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development that will provide input to the High-level Political Forum. Other priorities include resources to undertake a comprehensive regional capacity-building programme, and the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and follow-up and review at the regional level.

50. Under outcome 2 of the plan of action, ESCWA has earmarked funds for the preparation of most of the outputs. ESCWA has requested additional funds for thematic papers and expert group meetings to supplement the Horizon Series, as well as for the preparation of an annual regional monitoring report on SDGs and the study of options for regional follow-up and review. For the proposed regional thematic report, in collaboration with United Nations agencies, ESCWA will need to define the topic and the partners and cost share with other partners to prepare this report. The Development Account project will fund the launch of a regional data bank on regional SDG indicators and targets, however significant resources will need to be mobilized from extrabudgetary sources for a proposed pan-Arab multi-purpose survey.

51. Outcome 3 of the plan of action proposes a series of capacity-building and technical cooperation activities. With the exception of activities under the Development Account, which is expected to provide direct technical support to national statistical systems in the adaptation of targets, all other initiatives will need to secure their funding through Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation and extrabudgetary funds. Of high priority are the regional capacity-building programme and the national assessments.

6. Coordination and internal arrangements

52. Business as usual will not be enough to meet the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda, especially given the new mandates and the need for ESCWA to provide immediate support to member States. The ESCWA 2030 strategy includes a number of specific activities that are additional but complementary to the planned work, and conditional to the success of the strategy. A comprehensive stocktaking and assessment of existing ESCWA mechanisms, structure and resources – and their implications – is necessary for the organization to successfully embark on a complex new assignment and realignment of work towards implementing the 2030 Agenda.

53. Although the ultimate goal is to ensure that the 2030 Agenda is streamlined throughout ESCWA work, a new governance structure will be required to clarify roles and responsibilities, ensure oversight and accountability, provide multidisciplinary, encourage integration and achieve impact. A draft proposal for coordinating and implementing the 2030 Agenda within ESCWA has been developed (see annex to the present document).

G. DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION AND TIMELINE

Overall goal: ensure that the ESCWA work programme is coherent, relevant and consistent and contributes to the attainment of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development								
	Division/ office	Source of funding	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Outcome 1. To be the voice of the region by creating regional platforms for deliberation and consensus building that feed global forums								
1.1. Annual/biennial Arab Forum on Sustainable Development	To be determined	RB/PBI	✓	❖	❖	❖	❖	❖
• Regional expert group meeting on follow-up and review	To be determined	RB/PBI			❖			
• Regional expert group meeting on data	SD	RB		❖		❖		❖
• Regional forum on gender and the SDGs	ECW	XB		❖		❖		❖
1.2 ESCWA intergovernmental bodies as forums for exchange	SoC	RB						
• Regional arm of TFM and its Global Forum on STI for SDGs	TDD/ SDPD	RB		❖		❖		❖
• Regional consultations on financing for development and Addis Ababa Action Agenda follow-up	EDID	RB/PBI			❖		❖	
• Regional consultations on climate change	SDPD	RB			❖			
• Regional consultations on data and statistics	SD	RB	✓		❖		❖	
• High Level Conference on Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action	ECW	RB/XB	✓					❖
1.3 Meeting of the RCM as inter-agency platform	DES	RB/PBI	❖	❖	❖			
1.4 Three awareness raising sub-regional seminars on the 2030 Agenda, financing for development and climate change	To be determined	RB/PBI		❖	❖			
1.5 Two awareness raising subregional seminars on the linkages between national, regional and global follow-up and review	To be determined			❖	❖			

Overall goal: ensure that the ESCWA work programme is coherent, relevant and consistent and contributes to the attainment of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development								
	Division/ office	Source of funding	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Outcome 2: To be the think tank of the region by undertaking innovative research and supporting quality data collection and analysis for evidence-based policy								
2.1 Regional data bank on regional SDG indicators and trends	SD	RB		❖				
2.2 Methodologies for measuring sustainable development targets and indicators	SD	DA			❖	❖	❖	❖
2.3 Pan-Arab multi-purpose survey	SD/ EDID	XB		❖	❖	❖	❖	
2.4 Regional monitoring report on SDGs (input to Secretary-General's report)	All divisions/ offices	RB/PBI		❖	❖			
2.5 ESCWA major regional reports								
• Arab Report on Sustainable Development	All divisions/ offices	RB/PBI	✓				❖	
• Seven Horizon 2030 flagship reports								
o Water	SDPD	RB/PBI		❖				
o Energy	SDPD	RB/PBI		❖				
o Food Security	SDPD	RB/PBI			❖			
o Population and development	SDD	RB/PBI			❖			
o Technology	TDD	RB/PBI		❖				
o Women	ECW	RB/PBI			❖			
o Conflict and development	ECRI	RB/PBI		❖				
• Arab Development Outlook	EDID	RB			❖		❖	
• Arab Economic Integration	EDID	RB			❖		❖	
• Arab Poverty Report	EDID	RB		❖		❖		❖
• Status of Arab Women Report	ECW	RB	✓		❖		❖	
• Arab Climate Change Assessment Report	SDPD	RB/XB		❖				
• Arab MDG+ Initiative Annual Reports	SDPD	XB	❖	❖				
• Arab Governance Report	ECRI	RB	✓		❖		❖	
• Trends and Impacts on Conflict	ECRI	RB		❖		❖		❖
• Technical report: 2030 Agenda: Impact of Climate Change and Development	SDPD/ EDID	RB/PBI		❖	❖			
• Technical report: Disability and the 2030 Agenda	SDD	RB/PBI		❖	❖			
• Report: Methodology to identify to identify baselines of national targets and relevant indicator	SDD All divisions/ offices	RB/PBI		❖	❖			
• Three technical papers and regional workshops on the integration and alignment of SDGs to national plans	EDID All divisions/ offices	RB/PBI		❖	❖			

Overall goal: ensure that the ESCWA work programme is coherent, relevant and consistent and contributes to the attainment of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development								
	Division/ office	Source of funding	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
2.6 Regional thematic report with United Nations agencies (e.g. migration)	By Subject	RB/XB	✓		❖		❖	
2.7 Regional profiles (e.g. population, information society)	By Subject	RB		❖		❖		❖
2.8 Technical papers on SDGs (including cross-border and data reporting)	All divisions/ offices	RB/PBI		2 ❖	2 ❖			
2.9 Policy briefs on all SDGs	All divisions/ offices	RB		❖	❖	❖	❖	❖
2.10 Knowledge kits to support adaptation and monitoring on all SDGs	All divisions/ offices	RB/DA			❖		❖	
2.11 Regional consultation on the impact of climate change on implementation of the SDGs in the Arab region	SDPD	RB/PBI			❖			
2.12 Regional conference on technologies for the achievement of SDGs	TDD	RB/PBI			❖			
2.13 Regional seminar on mobilizing domestic resources for development in the Arab countries	EDID	RB/PBI		❖				
2.14 Expert group meeting on the progress made by Arab countries in the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda	To be determined	RB/PBI		❖				
2.15 Sectoral Studies on the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda				❖	❖			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technology transfer and adaptation for sustainable consumption and production in the Arab countries: case studies in waste, water and energy 	SDPD/ TDD	RB/PBI		❖				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Study and regional consultation on the alignment of national plans in the field of water, energy, food and environment with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda 	SDPD/TDD	RB/PBI			❖			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Study on ICTs, digital economy, STI and SDGs 	TDD	RB/PBI		❖				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Study on the impact of illicit financial outflows on Arab economies 	EDID	RB/PBI			❖			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Study on remittances and development in Palestine 	EDID	RB/PBI		❖				

Overall goal: ensure that the ESCWA work programme is coherent, relevant and consistent and contributes to the attainment of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development								
	Division/ office	Source of funding	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Outcome 3: To be the advisor of the region, providing regional, subregional and national capacity-building and technical advisory services								
3.1 Regional capacity-building programme on 2030 Agenda, including:								
• General overview: an introduction to SDG processes	C & I	RPTC/ XB	❖	❖	❖	❖		
• Gender equality and SDGs/2030 Agenda	ECW	RPTC/ XB		❖	❖	❖	❖	
• Macro-economic policies for inclusive development	EDID	RPTC/ XB						
• Measuring poverty and inequality	EDID	RPTC						
• Data adaptation, collection and analysis	SD	DA		❖	❖	❖		
• Technology transfer	TDD							
3.2 Regional capacity on national, regional and global follow-up and review linkages	C & I	RPTC/ XB			❖	❖	❖	
3.3 Support adaptation, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the 2030 Agenda								
• National assessments/baselines	All divisions/ offices	RPTC/ DA	❖	❖	❖			
• Adaptation of targets and indicators and data collection	SD	DA		❖	❖	❖		
• Integration into national development plans	All divisions/ offices	RPTC/ XB		❖	❖	❖	❖	
• Support member States along thematic/sector areas	All divisions/ offices	RPTC		❖	❖	❖	❖	❖
• Support national monitoring and reporting	C & I	RPTC/ XB				❖	❖	❖

Annex**DRAFT PROPOSAL****Responding to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:
ESCWA internal governance structure****Introduction**

ESCWA divisions are aligning their 2016-2017 work programmes along the SDGs and will implement activities in the framework of the 2030 Agenda. However, given the new mandates and the need for ESCWA to provide immediate support to member States during the adoption, adaptation, implementation, and follow-up and review phases, the ESCWA 2030 strategy goes beyond business as usual to include a number of specific activities that are additional but complementary to the planned work, and conditional to the success of the strategy.

The following is a draft proposal for the internal governance structure for the management and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda/SDGs as outlined in the ESCWA 2030 strategy.

The proposed 2030 Agenda Coordination and Implementation Unit is designed to ensure coordination, implementation and a harmonized response to the 2030 Agenda.

2030 Agenda Coordination and Implementation Unit

Overview of roles and responsibilities	Coordination, follow-up on processes, implementation of ESCWA 2030 strategy and activities (non-division based). Takes the lead in the activities listed in the draft plan of action, which includes the coordination or the direct organization of 18 meetings and over 20 reports over a two year period
Staffing needs	Three professional staff (1 P4 and 2 P3s) and one GS staff
Reporting lines	Supervisor: Executive Secretary. Oversight body: Cabinet
Other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task force as advisory body • Technical team as multidisciplinary resource whose members (and alternates) are permanent 2030 Agenda focal points at the level of their respective divisions and can be called upon individually or in groups to lead/implement specific tasks • Research assistants as in-house experts to be called upon for specific technical cooperation and capacity-building missions
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most viable and centralized option with easy oversight by Executive Secretary and cabinet, and most potential for coordination amongst different disciplines • Accountability for implementation is higher • Autonomy of a unit would lead to better clarity in both representational and functional roles • Enhanced ownership over the post 2030 Agenda by divisions and balanced representation of all divisions through the task force.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new unit could only be created if new posts are made available, or by the reallocation of posts from other parts of the organization • Task force members may need to put in more time if tasked with specific missions, potentially to the detriment of their own division's work
