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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Eighth Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change
Negotiations for the Arab Countries

Beirut, Lebanon, 10-13 April 2017

INFORMATION NOTE

I. BACKGROUND

The Arab region is one of the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change even though it contributes less than 5 per cent to global greenhouse gas emissions. In recent years, weather patterns have become more unpredictable, and the region has been subject to extreme climate events such as droughts, floods, dust storms and intense heat waves. Climate change and its impacts have been recognised as a major challenge to the region's efforts to achieve sustainable development and is considered a threat that may undermine past successes and future prospects.

The Governments of Arab States are active participants in the climate change negotiations pursued under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through the annual sessions convened by the Conference of the Parties (COP). They are also engaged in associated preparatory processes organized at the national, regional and global levels. The UNFCCC generally aims to limit or reduce the root causes of climate change (through mitigation), and develop mechanisms to enhance resilience to climate change (through adaptation and associated measures). The outcomes of global negotiations on the approach for pursuing these efforts are highly relevant to the people of the Arab region and their future livelihoods.

The Paris Agreement, adopted at COP21 (Paris, December 2015), represents a turning point in climate negotiations. It established a common framework that commits for the first time all countries, including the developing countries, to pursue their best efforts to reach a common temperature goal of holding the increase in the global average temperature to below 2°C by the end of the century. The provisions of the Agreement require developed and developing countries to submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to clarify how they aim to achieve this goal, and to undergo a periodic review of their implementation, with due respect paid to national capacities and circumstances. The Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA) was established by the same decision that adopted the Paris Agreement. The purpose of the group was to prepare for the entry into force of the Paris Agreement and for the convening of the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA). The Paris Agreement entered into force on 4 November 2016. By end of March 2017, 21 Arab States had ratified the Agreement.

The 2016 United Nations Climate Change Conference was convened in Marrakech, Morocco from 7 to 19 November 2016 and concluded with the adoption of the *Marrakech Action Proclamation for Our Climate and Sustainable Development*, which reiterates the commitments set forth in the Paris Agreement. The conference included the 22nd session of the Conference of the Parties (COP22), the 12th session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP12), the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA1), and the meetings of three subsidiary bodies (SBs). The Parties agreed during the negotiations to complete the rulebook on modalities and procedures for the Paris Agreement by 2018.

While each country in the Arab region has to some extent different needs and national specificities, it has been recognised that many of the challenges faced by the Arab region are similar. Regional exchange and dialogue on common issues of concern can thus assist Arab States to prepare for upcoming negotiations. There are also benefits of being informed about the positions of other developing countries with respect to the issues included in the Paris Agreement and subsequent negotiations. A series of regional workshops has thus been convened under the auspices of the League of Arab States and United Nations organizations serving the Arab region to increase understanding and exchange on the common concerns of Arab countries. These workshops serve to assist Arab member States in the preparation and implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions and to provide information on the associated financial, technological and capacity-building support available to assist them.

II. SCOPE

Upon the request of the League of Arab States, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has organized eight regional workshops to assist Arab States to prepare for global climate change negotiations. ESCWA organized jointly with the League of Arab States four regional workshops between 2013 and 2015, and was later joined by the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA) as a partner starting with the fifth workshop in 2015. The Cairo Office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) joined the partnership in 2016 at the seventh workshop. This series of regional workshop is reviewed below:

- The first workshop (Amman, 22-24 October 2013) examined climate change mitigation and adaptation actions and means to strengthen the capacity of Arab representatives and negotiators;
- The second workshop (Amman, 26-28 May 2014) focused on developing the negotiation skills of Arab climate change negotiators with respect to international agreements based on ESCWA's "Guide on climate change negotiations for representatives and negotiators from Arab countries";
- The third workshop (Kuwait, 11-13 November 2014) further prepared Arab negotiators for global climate change negotiations and the issues set for discussion at COP-20 in Lima (December 2014);
- The fourth workshop (Doha, 19-21 May 2015): to discuss issues to be negotiated in the preparatory meetings held in Bonn prior to COP21 in Paris during the period 30 November to 11 December 2015;
- The fifth workshop (Cairo, 17-19 November 2015) provided a forum to build common perspectives among Arab States taking into consideration the challenges and limits of such common positions in preparation for COP21;
- The sixth workshop (Cairo, 3-6 April 2016) discussed the views of Arab States with respect to the Paris Agreement and its legal aspects, as well as provided an opportunity for exchange on the NDCs submitted by Arab States. The workshop also enhanced understanding of the procedures and modalities of the financial mechanism established under the UNFCCC and ways to access the Green Climate Fund (GCF); as well as means to access technology-related assistance through the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN).
- The seventh workshop (Rabat, 25-27 September 2016) prepared Arab States for COP22; discussed Arab positions with respect to the outcomes of the Bonn Conference on Climate Change; enhanced understanding of the legal effects of the different provisions included in the Paris Agreement and its associated means of implementation, including issues related to its anticipated entry into force. It also discussed access to finance through the GCF and its accredited entities.

Continued support is being provided to the Arab climate change negotiators at the eighth regional workshop, which will be hosted by ESCWA in Beirut from 10 to 13 April 2017.

III. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the Eighth Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries are as follows:

- Develop a comprehensive overview of adaptation elements by:
 - Identifying adaptation contribution elements with high resilience potential;
 - Attracting private sector investments for associated benefits;
 - Establishing common adaptation efforts and means for sharing information;
 - Discussing economic diversification and lessons learned.
- Discuss the transparency framework of the Paris Agreement by:
 - Recognizing flexibility and means to operationalize it;
 - Linking transparency actions to provisions of support;
 - Ensuring the nationally determined approach in transparency.
- Update on the status of undertaking the global stocktake by:
 - Creating an all-inclusive system that would reflect mitigation, adaptation, impact of response measures, and MOIs;
 - Discussing global aggregation versus individual country-level accountability;
 - Reviewing the role of scientific input and sources of data.
- Enhance the capacities of Arab negotiators on mitigation practices by:
 - Maintaining the voluntary nature in the design of the features of the NDCs;
 - Discussing NDCs' timeframes and its relation to national economic circumstances;
 - Reviewing conditional and non-conditional NDCs, linking MOIs to actions.
- Review the compliance regime:
 - Ensuring non-punitive, non-judicial, non-intrusive system;
 - Discussing flexibility to reflect capacities and resources;
 - Developing expert based system versus intergovernmental system.
- Update on status of engagement of the Arab countries with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN).
- Review the latest results of the vulnerability assessment of climate change on key sectors in the Arab region based on the United Nations-League of Arab States Regional Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR) outputs.
- Review of climate change adaptation efforts in the water resources sector in the Arab region.

IV. WORKSHOP STRUCTURE AND METHODOLOGY

The workshop will focus on the outcomes of COP22 in Marrakech, the first Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA1), the Paris Agreement and its legally binding nature, as well as finance and technology. The workshop will also cover issues related to progress in the negotiations and issues related to the modalities for the implementation and monitoring of the Paris Agreement, CMA, and the APA mandate.

ESCWA will also update the participants on the latest scientific outputs and projections for the Arab region generated under RICCAR, and discuss means through which climate science can inform adaptation as well as climate change policies and positions. The League of Arab States, UNEP/ROWA and UNESCO/Cairo office will contribute to the discussions related to the adaptation gap, technology assessments, food security in the context of climate action, ambition, social awareness and education on climate change.

V. PARTICIPANTS

Participants shall be senior official negotiators from Arab States with hands-on experience in UNFCCC COP processes and preparations. Member States are strongly advised to include in their national delegations junior negotiators, who are qualified to become members of future national negotiation teams.

VI. LANGUAGE

The workshop will be conducted in the Arabic and English languages. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided.

VII. VENUE AND DATE

The workshop will be hosted by ESCWA at its headquarters, which are located at the United Nations House in Beirut, Lebanon. A block of rooms has been reserved for participants at the Markazia Suites Hotel, which is situated two blocks from ESCWA (5 minute walk). A logistical information note with additional details will be sent to participants following their nomination.

VIII. VISA

Participants are responsible for securing their own visa to Lebanon. Arrangements can be made through the Lebanese Embassy in their home country. ESCWA can facilitate issuance of entry visas to Lebanon only in special cases and if requested.

IX. CORRESPONDENCE

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