

**Statement by Mouin Hamze
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**Statement at: Expert Group Meeting on "Green Technology
Investments and Access to Sustainable Financing in the Arab Region"**

**Beirut – Lebanon
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I am delighted and honored to join you today at this important and timely meeting on Green Technology and Access to Sustainable Financing in the Arab Region; hosted by ESCWA, in collaboration with CTCN, and The National Council for Scientific Research – Lebanon (CNRS-L); and with the participation of esteemed experts, both national and regional, contributing with their valued knowledge and expertise.

Over the last few years, our partnership with ESCWA have witnessed an important expansion. Collaborating to enhance a dialogue and initiatives that continuously integrate the dynamics of a changing research landscape and actively respond to new challenges in both our country and our region.

Allow me to take this chance, to sincerely congratulate Dr. Rola Dashti on her recent appointment as Executive Secretary of looking forward to further enhancing our partnership.

Dear Colleagues,

Freshwater scarcity, population growth, urbanization, conflict and changing migration patterns have increased pressures on our ecosystems. Climate change is imposing additional strains on the environment and our limited natural resources. In addition, a lacking clear vision and efficient mechanisms for environmental governance have all certainly created adverse effects on food security, energy demand and needs, sustainable rural livelihoods, and human health.

As we often hear, all these ‘terms’ become universal slogans; but unfortunately, they pose real Arab challenges which require immediate response and government transparency within a regional framework of actions; and in which ESCWA is well placed to act as a reliable coordinator.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Efforts to mitigate and ensure sustainable development based on innovation in green technology must be firmly grounded in a science and research approach. However, research on Green Technology in our region is still a minute, but growing, endeavor. At the CNRS-L, and during the latest Grant Research Call; 27 funded projects (around 11%) are classified within green technologies, covering thematic areas of: pollution reduction, reuse of recycling materials, green building, green chemistry and renewable energy.

In parallel, regional and international programmes of research and development is increasingly stressing a ‘green’ approach. Yet, during implementation, developing green and eco-friendly technologies gets dropped or side-tracked in favor of quick and profitable solutions. Placing sustainable development in a competitive stand against personal benefits; unfortunately, the later usually ‘wins.

And while most countries adhere to the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; we are always surprised, that in many countries –not only Arab - scientists and concerned research institutions have not been called upon for coordinating varying points of view on environmental considerations and impact assessments; and are always marginalized in favor of political and sometimes personal interests.

In Lebanon we have a relatively small, but active, capable and competent research community. Even though, we witness every day, in random, inappropriate proposal to rising challenges of water, energy, waste management, air quality, food waste, etc... Initiatives that are characterized by lacking scientific expertise and sometimes full avoidance of researchers, scientists and their valuable knowledge to build a sustainable community.

Research does not always provide policy and decisions makers with big discoveries, or quick and favorable solutions. The very nature of research and innovation – to discover and offer new approaches, including Green Technology – is a timely endeavor, requiring long-term investment and implementing time-frames.

Dear Experts,

I wish us active discussions over the next three days, through interesting sessions that will delve further into green technology priorities, transfer, investment and implementation. Stressing that in a debate on sustainable development, research and innovation must remain a vital pre-requisite that mobilizes qualified and committed human resources, having a clear interest to transfer them knowledge;

Finally, allow me to recognize and thank Mrs. Reem Nejdawi, Director of the ESCWA Technology Centre and her efficient team in both Amman and Beirut, for their dedication and efforts in planning and organizing this important event. Thanking also ESCWA for its continued commitment in undertaking strategic and timely initiatives to face the challenges of our region.

Thank you.