



## **Information Note**

### **Expert Group Meeting on the UN-ESCWA Publication: “Technology as a Renewed Hope to Achieving Gender Equality in the Arab Region: A Fact or Illusion?”**

UN House, Beirut- Lebanon  
24 and 25 October 2018

#### **Background**

The ESCWA Centre for Women (ECW) is organizing an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) to discuss the draft publication titled “*Technology as a Renewed Hope to Achieving Gender Equality in the Arab Region: A Fact or Illusion?*” to be published in autumn 2019.

Geared towards promoting the realization of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), advancing gender equality principal promoted in Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and ensuring the attainment of the central principal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of “leaving no one behind”, the publication will boost the realization of gender equality and women’s empowerment using technology.

Women rights and gender issues have been high on the development agenda of Arab countries for the last few decades. There has been important progress on many fronts. However, the progress made does not live up to the expectations since it failed to entirely redress the situation of women in the region and achieve gender equality. Therefore, this publication seeks to promote the realization of goal 5 of the sustainable development goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment through technology, particularly Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The SDGs framework serves as the basis for the analysis. The publication is expected to conceptualize how ICTs could be challenged to boost the realization of all targets of SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. It will build on good practices tackling the different targets of SDG 5 and drawn on international experiences to analyse their potential customization to the regional context taking into consideration the existing

regional challenges. The publication will conclude with a set of policy recommendations for government and non-government stakeholders on how to harness technology to redress gender inequalities in the region.

The publication is foreseen to include seven chapters as detailed below:

- Chapter One: an introductory chapter that provides a situational analysis of the region following the 6 targets of SDG5 and that are:
  - 5.1. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere;
  - 5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation;
  - 5.3. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation;
  - 5.4. Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate;
  - 5.5. Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life;
  - 5.6. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the programme of action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.
  
- Chapter Two to Six: each of these chapters will focus on one (or two) of the 6 targets of SDG 5 (targets 5.2 and 5.3 will be addressed together in one chapter). The purpose of each of these chapters is to demonstrate how technology could be used to promote gender equality based on good practices drawn from the international and regional contexts. Each chapter is also expected to shed light on the drawbacks and threats that technology can present to the theme that it is discussing;
  
- Chapter Seven: this chapter presents the main conclusions and policy recommendations.

### **Objective of the meeting**

This EGM is organized with the aim of discussing and validating the first draft of the publication. The discussion is expected to feed into the publication and support its finalization. It is also expected to contribute to setting sound policy recommendations for future action.

Confirmed experts in the EGM will receive an English draft of the publication around two weeks ahead of the meeting and are expected to provide written general and/or specific comments on the publication, as well as engage in discussing the publication at the EGM.

### **Framework of the Meeting**

The two-day EGM is organized around seven main sessions following the structure of the publication. The opening session will set the stage for the discussion by presenting the background of the publication and its objectives. It will also present the situation of women in the Arab region to lay the ground for the analysis.

Each of the five main sessions of the meeting will be driven by the themes covered in the targets of goal 5 and discuss, building on examples, how technology could be used to promote gender equality with good practices drawn from the international and regional contexts.

The closing session will focus on the main recommendations to improve and finalise the first draft of the publication.

### **Date and Venue**

The Expert Group Meeting is organized by UN- ESCWA and will be held at the United Nations House, in Beirut, on 24 and 25 October 2018.

### **Language of the meeting**

The meeting will be conducted in English. Simultaneous translation to Arabic will be available.

### **Visas and travel arrangements**

#### ***Travel***

UN- ESCWA will make the necessary arrangements for all participants' travel in terms of flight reservation and ticket issuance.

**Very important notice: Please do not purchase your own tickets; the organization cannot reimburse self-tickets.**

#### ***Entry Visas***

Participants are kindly requested to **send a coloured copy of their valid passport along with contact details** (telephone, fax number and e-mail) to Ms. Iman Bakkar, Administrative Assistant, [Bakkari@un.org](mailto:Bakkari@un.org), no later than **17 September 2018.**

#### **Accommodation (for participants from outside Lebanon only)**

Participants are responsible for making their own hotel bookings in Beirut. UN-ESCWA has taken the necessary arrangements to provide accommodations at discounted prices. To view a list of such hotels, kindly refer to the attached list of hotels. Please note that "Al Markazia Suites" is the nearest hotel to the UN House, however most hotels are also within commuting distance.

Participants should contact the hotel directly for reservations as desired and indicate that they are participating in an expert group meeting at ESCWA, to be entitled for a reduced corporate UN rate.

Participants are also responsible for settling their own accommodation bills and other expenses directly with the hotel before departure.

UN-ESCWA will cover travel and accommodation expenses of participants residing outside Lebanon, in accordance with United Nations rules and procedures. According to UN rules and regulations, UN-ESCWA pledged a daily allowance of \$246 per participant during the period of the meeting to cover accommodation and incidentals in addition to \$188 to cover miscellaneous costs of transportation to and from the airport. Transportation arrangements to and from the airport are organized directly by the participants themselves. Daily subsistence allowance and terminal expenses will be paid to the experts via bank transfer in United States Dollars. *(2 weeks after the meeting).*

**Participants are kindly urged to fill the attached bank information form and sent it back to Ms. Iman Bakkar ([bakkari@un.org](mailto:bakkari@un.org)).**

Participants are also kindly requested to present the following documents to the ESCWA representative at the registration desk on the day of the meeting:

- Original passport;
- Copy of airline ticket and original boarding pass.

Review of these documents is necessary to allow for the issuance of DSA.

Please direct all correspondence and queries related to this meeting to the following staff members in ECW.

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|------------------------|---|--|---------------|
| Ms. Rouba Arja         | Social Affairs Officer, ESCWA<br>Centre for Women   | <a href="mailto:arja@un.org">arja@un.org</a>             | +961-1-978420 |
| Ms. Sukaina Al-Nasrawi | Social Affairs Officer, ESCWA<br>Centre for Women   | <a href="mailto:al-nasrawi@un.org">al-nasrawi@un.org</a> | +961-1-978551 |
| Ms. Iman Bakkar        | Administrative Assistant,<br>ESCWA Centre for Women | <a href="mailto:bakkari@un.org">bakkari@un.org</a>       | +961-1-978812 |