



Report

Twelfth session of the Committee on Energy Beirut, 24-25 June 2019

Summary

The Committee on Energy of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its twelfth session in Beirut on 24 and 25 June 2019.

The session agenda contained several priority topics, including follow-up on the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee on Energy at its eleventh session; progress made in the implementation of energy-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work; developments in the field of energy in the Arab region; Arab cooperation in addressing climate change from an energy perspective; and progress achieved towards the energy-related Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab region. The Committee also reviewed the proposed programme plan for 2020 in the field of energy and held a round-table discussion on energy in national sustainable development plans.

The present report summarises key interventions and discussions and sets out the recommendations made by the Committee.

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Introduction

1. The Committee on Energy of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its twelfth session in Beirut on 24 and 25 June 2019, pursuant to ESCWA resolution 204 (XVIII) of 25 May 1995 on the establishment of a Committee on Energy in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which was adopted by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in resolution 1995/25 of 24 July 1995.

2. The following sections set out the key recommendations adopted by the Committee at its twelfth session.¹

I. RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AT ITS TWELFTH SESSION

3. The Committee issued the following recommendations at its twelfth session, some addressed to member States and others to the ESCWA secretariat.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEMBER STATES

(a) Take note of progress in implementing the recommendations made by the Committee on Energy at its eleventh session, of activities undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat between the eleventh and twelfth sessions of the Committee, and of the activities of the expert group on fossil fuels;

(b) Welcome efforts by the ESCWA secretariat aimed at linking the findings of studies and reports to technical cooperation activities, while noting the importance of translating those activities into projects that recognize the specificities of Arab countries;

(c) Include the energy-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), targets and indicators in national and sectoral development plans through an integrated approach, and monitor progress in implementation;

(d) Tackle vulnerabilities in energy sectors as a development priority in the Arab region, such as over-reliance on fossil fuels as a primary energy source and a lack of systematic management of energy demand; and address prevailing supply and demand patterns by adopting strategies aimed at building capacity to optimize benefits from natural resources, developing appropriate infrastructure and technology, and applying good governance and sustainable management practices;

(e) Devise sustainable development solutions to systematically manage demand through more effective pricing policies that reflect the true cost of energy so as to rationalize consumption, ensure energy efficiency, invest in infrastructure and information, diversify energy supply, apply decentralized energy solutions, optimize benefits from the added value of carbon, disseminate the concept of energy productivity, and separate economic growth from energy consumption to ensure the rights of current and future generations;

(f) Focus further on supporting the energy-water-food nexus and develop related institutional capacity, while ensuring coordination and integration between sectors in formulating national strategies, policies, plans and programmes;

(g) Develop policies for the localization of renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency in national priority areas;

(h) Strengthen linkages between nationally determined contributions regarding climate change and the SDGs, with a focus on Goals 7 and 13 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

¹ Session information, documents and reports are available from <https://www.unescwa.org/events/committee-energy-12th-session>.

(i) Continue benefiting from services provided by the ESCWA Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies, including data, analyses, recommendations, projects and partnerships, and use them as guidance when developing regional and national policies, strategies, reports and research for knowledge-based climate action;

(j) Confirm energy-related regional priorities under the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the Addis Ababa Action Plan emanating from the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, and participate actively in related international events;

(k) Build national capacity to collect and analyse information and statistics on energy production, distribution and consumption by all end consumers, and other relevant data;

(l) Inform the ESCWA secretariat periodically of efforts to implement the energy-related SDGs and provide it with data to monitor progress.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ESCWA SECRETARIAT

(a) Continue efforts to examine issues related to sustainable energy management, optimal use of natural resources, and opportunities in promising sectors at the national and regional levels so as to achieve the SDGs;

(b) Develop member States' capacity and expand activities to build national capacity in sustainable energy policymaking, particularly in diversifying the energy mix, improving energy efficiency, addressing vulnerabilities, mainstreaming renewable energy especially in rural areas, with special focus on rural women and young people, and strengthening cooperation with United Nations regional commissions and other international and regional organizations involved in achieving the 2030 Agenda;

(c) Continue providing technical support, including advisory services, studies, events and training sessions, upon official request from member States in line with their priorities, so as to overcome challenges they face in achieving the energy-related SDGs, and support member States in sharing their experiences;

(d) Support member States in evaluating progress under SDG 7 on energy and other related Goals, develop energy access indicators, expand energy efficiency measures and mainstream renewable energy, and identify regional priorities for the coming years;

(e) Urge countries to periodically inform ESCWA of their efforts in implementing the energy-related SDGs, and provide it with data to monitor progress;

(f) Provide member States with periodic reports to inform them of ESCWA activities in the field of energy;

(g) Continue coordinating with the League of Arab States and other regional organizations on implementing the energy-related SDGs and targets, and integrate ESCWA energy-related activities more broadly in the agenda of the Arab Ministerial Council for Electricity to ensure a greater impact on decision-making;

(h) Strengthen linkages between research, analytical studies and policies across all relevant sectors, and involve all stakeholders in formulating appropriate and inclusive policies in the field of climate change;

(i) Intensify efforts to transform knowledge produced by the secretariat through studies and reports into interactive and practical tools and platforms, to be used by countries in decision-making.

II. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

A. PROGRESS ACHIEVED SINCE THE ELEVENTH SESSION

1. *Implementation of recommendations made by the Committee on Energy at its eleventh session*
(Agenda item 4)

4. Under this item, the Committee on Energy considered document E/ESCWA/C.3/2019/3 on the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee on Energy at its eleventh session. The representative of the secretariat gave an overview of activities and events related to sustainable energy management at the regional and international levels that ESCWA had organized or participated in, studies and technical reports its had issued, SDG 7 on energy and other related Goals, public policies in the Arab region, activities related to the water-energy-food nexus, technical support provided by ESCWA to member States, and cooperation initiatives and partnerships with various energy-related organizations.

2. *Implementation of energy-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work*
(Agenda item 5)

5. Under this item, the Committee considered document E/ESCWA/C.3/2019/4 on the implementation of energy-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work since its eleventh session. The representative of the secretariat reviewed activities organized by ESCWA related to building national capacity and disseminating knowledge, preparing studies and technical reports, and implementing projects financed by the United Nations Development Account and international organizations. She also discussed technical support in fields of priority for certain member States, and collaboration with other United Nations regional commissions and international and regional organizations on sustainable energy and the 2030 Agenda. She reviewed activities that contributed to developing an electronic platform for the sustainable energy market under the International Renewable Energy Agency, and publishing four case studies on renewable energy policies and regulations to support energy strategies in Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates. Such activities also included signing a memorandum of understanding with the Sustainable Energy for All initiative; and a joint declaration with the Islamic Development Bank on Sustainable Energy for All, along with a financing agreement to prepare a 2019 monitoring report on the implementation of SDG 7; and launching a partnership with the World Organization for Electrical Connectivity (GEIDCO) to promote the establishment of a global energy interconnection system to meet electricity demand.

3. *Implementation of technical cooperation activities with member States*
(Agenda item 6)

6. Under this item, the Committee considered document E/ESCWA/C.3/2019/5 on the implementation of technical cooperation activities with member States. The representative of the secretariat made a presentation on bilateral technical support provided to Iraq, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia (through workshops, seminars and events in specific fields, organized upon official request); regional technical support in collaboration with several partners such as the Arab Union of Electricity, the National Electric Power Company in Jordan, the Ministry of Electricity and Renewable Energy of Egypt (through training workshops), and the Ministry of Energy and Water of Lebanon. The representative of the secretariat also reviewed training workshops targeting decision makers and executives under projects financed by the United Nations Development Account.

7. In the ensuing discussion, participants noted the activities implemented by the secretariat, and expressed their appreciation and their wish to strengthen future collaboration. The representatives of Libya and Mauritania said that their countries required technical support through training workshops to build national capacity, similar to those conducted by ESCWA in other countries. The representative of Egypt commended ESCWA efforts and activities since the eleventh session of the Committee on Energy, and requested that

meetings be held at the level of ministries and decision makers to develop better mechanisms for coordinating and implementing recommendations made by the Committee or those set out in technical reports.

8. The representative of the secretariat welcomed the requests by Libya and Mauritania, noting that it was vital to clearly inform ESCWA of their technical cooperation needs via official channels, so as to facilitate close collaboration and more effective support. She confirmed that ESCWA was striving to ensure concerted and integrated efforts in the region, especially in coordination with the Energy Department of the League of Arab States. ESCWA also wanted to present the findings of its reports and studies on sustainable energy at meetings of the Arab Ministerial Council for Electricity and its related committees.

9. The representative of the League of Arab States said that cooperation already existed through ESCWA participation in meetings of the Arab Ministerial Council for Electricity, the Executive Board and relevant committees, by presenting activities in areas of common interest, and through collaboration to implement regional events. She also welcomed the participation of ESCWA representatives in all the League of Arab States' ministerial meetings related to energy.

B. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF ENERGY IN THE ARAB REGION

1. *Status of energy systems in the Arab region* (Agenda item 7)

10. Under this item, the Committee considered document E/ESCWA/C.3/2019/6 on the status of energy systems in the Arab region. The representative of the secretariat reviewed the vulnerabilities of the energy sector in the Arab region owing to increased demand, over-reliance on fossil fuels, and challenges related to accessing energy resources. She said that Arab countries and their social groups suffered from disparate difficulties and faced differing challenges in that field. She noted the challenges emanating from energy sector vulnerabilities in the Arab region, including weak infrastructure, a lack of public awareness on the need to conserve energy and the environment, a rapid increase in domestic energy demand, and escalating conflicts and instability. She proposed solutions for more sustainable energy systems in the region, including effective management of energy demand, diversifying energy sources and their use in Arab countries, and mainstreaming the concept of energy productivity as a more accurate indicator of improved energy use.

11. In the ensuing discussion, participants said that energy sector vulnerabilities posed severe threats in the Arab region, and that the topic required further discussion and analysis.

2. *Activities of the expert group on fossil fuels* (Agenda item 8)

12. Under this item, the Committee considered document E/ESCWA/C.3/2019/7 on activities of the expert group on fossil fuels. The representative of the secretariat reviewed the formation of the expert group, pursuant to a recommendation by the Committee on Energy at its eleventh session, aimed at formulating a regional programme in that field, encouraging regional integration and cooperation, and preparing studies and reports. She said that the group comprised experts, specialists and representatives of Governments, national oil and gas companies, the private sector, and international and non-governmental organizations. She presented proposals for the group of experts' work programme; and key recommendations made at its first meeting, held on 5 December 2018, on policies, legislation, pricing, contracts and partnerships with the private sector, fossil fuel technologies and carbon management, renewable energy integration, best practices and lessons learned in the field, and capacity-building for member States in national priority areas.

13. Participants welcomed the formation of the expert group and noted its activities. They also requested further collaboration between member States within the expert group's mandate.

C. ARAB COOPERATION IN ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

1. *Exploring the interface between nationally determined contributions and the Sustainable Development Goals: common goals* (Agenda item 9)

14. Under this item, the Committee considered document [E/ESCWA/C.3/2019/8](#) on the interface between nationally determined contributions and the SDGs in the Arab region. The representative of the secretariat said that the two agendas emphasized the need for convergence between climate change actions and sustainable development. Most studies highlighted the interface, and the positive impact of mitigation measures set out in nationally determined contributions on sustainable development. He reviewed climate change measures under SDGs 7 and 13, and those derived from Arab countries' nationally determined contributions. He also noted ways to further link the two agendas to achieve sustainable and inclusive development.

15. Participants commended ESCWA efforts in that field. The representative of Egypt said that it was necessary to focus on nationally determined contributions because they were expected to play a significant role in preparatory meetings for the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Developed countries were striving to shift the discussions towards mitigation measures rather than adaptation without taking into account countries affected by climate change, which were mostly developing countries.

16. The representative of Jordan said that donor countries had not fulfilled their commitments in that regard. The representative of Mauritania reviewed his country's efforts to increase the share of renewables in the energy mix to 43 per cent. He said that Mauritania was striving to increase that share to 60 per cent using wind, solar and hydroelectric sources.

17. In response, the representative of the secretariat indicated the similarities between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda regarding climate change. She said that the 2030 Agenda focused on the development dimension that stressed the need for climate change adaptation. She urged countries to draw parallels between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda when tackling such issues. She stressed that donor countries' lack of commitment was not a reason to overlook Arab countries' rights, which should not be abandoned but rather emphasized.

2. *Arab Centre For Climate Change Policies: an integrated approach to climate change* (Agenda item 10)

18. Under this item, the Committee considered document [E/ESCWA/C.3/2019/9](#) on the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies. The representative of the secretariat reviewed the Centre's mandate and functions, which included technical support and advisory services, capacity-building and institutional support, policy consultation, integrated responses, and regional knowledge. She presented the activities undertaken by the Centre over the period July 2018–May 2019 in various fields, such as evaluating and analysing climate change, geographic information systems, climate change negotiations, disaster risk reduction, and preparing for active participation in global conferences. She discussed some of the Centre's achievements, especially the establishment of the Regional Knowledge Hub comprising an electronic platform launched in June 2018, and an electronic portal launched in April 2019. She also reviewed some of the Centre's future activities. She urged member States to conduct further research and studies, and to collaborate with the Centre in that area to emphasize the region's voice at international events.

19. Participants commended the Centre's efforts. The representative of Jordan enquired about the potential for duplication between the Centre's work and that of the League of Arab States. The representative of Egypt confirmed his country's full support for the Centre's work as a platform for coordinating Arab positions, especially in climate change negotiations. He added that some Arab countries, such as Egypt and Morocco,

were members of different regional groups whose positions could clash, which highlighted the importance of the Centre in coordinating and unifying positions.

20. In response, the representative of the secretariat confirmed that the partnership with the League of Arab States was strategic, and that the Centre was necessary to emphasize the region's voice at United Nations events. She said that Arab negotiators had encouraged and supported the Centre, and that the issue required broad participation from member States, especially since energy sector vulnerability and productivity and energy efficiency were linked to climate change. Member States could benefit from the ESCWA electronic portal (part of RICCAR activities) and the technical reports therein. She noted that the Centre had received technical cooperation requests from Egypt, Jordan and Morocco to benefit from ESCWA expertise in the field.

D. PROGRESS ACHIEVED TOWARDS THE ENERGY-RELATED SDGs IN THE ARAB REGION

1. *Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals in national development plans* (Agenda item 11)

21. Under this item, the Committee considered document [E/ESCWA/C.3/2019/10](#) on integrating the SDGs in national development plans. The representative of the secretariat said that the 2030 Agenda had been adopted as a planning, implementation, follow-up and review framework, which required building stakeholder capacity, aligning national policies, plans and strategies with the SDGs and their targets, mobilizing domestic resources and official development assistance, and following up on progress in implementation and in enhancing accountability. He reviewed ESCWA efforts in that regard, stating that it was working on achieving integrated management of natural resources in the region, organizing regional preparatory meetings, and supporting the establishment and enhancement of institutional mechanisms for food, water and energy security.

22. The representative of the secretariat stressed the importance of linkages between policies and the SDGs. She said that focusing on SDG 7 would not achieve the desired results without such linkages. However, it was also vital to identify inconsistencies between SDGs, as exemplified in the contradiction between encouraging agriculture and limiting water use. Countries must therefore determine their priorities in accordance with those linkages and inconsistencies.

2. *Progress in the field of energy: related SDGs in the Arab region* (Agenda item 12)

23. Under this item, the Committee considered document [E/ESCWA/C.3/2019/11](#) on achieving the energy-related SDGs in the Arab region. The representative of the secretariat reviewed progress in SDG 7 indicators, especially increasing access to electricity and clean fuel technology for cooking. She indicated that renewable energy sources as a proportion of final energy consumption had not increased sufficiently, and that energy intensity of GDP on a purchasing power parity (PPP) basis had not decreased enough. She noted the short-term priority measures in that area, including increasing fossil fuel efficiency, building institutional capacity, and supporting local administrations. She noted priority measures until 2030, especially adopting proactive and integrated policies, establishing an effective system to manage supply and demand, and strengthening regional cooperation.

24. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Libya said that reference to subsidies remained general and required further detail. The representative of Mauritania said that renewable energy as a proportion of total energy generated had reached 40 per cent in his country, but the main challenge lays in transport, which Mauritania was working hard to overcome.

25. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that the report on subsidies was brief, and that a future report would contain more detail. She noted that data from Mauritania had caused controversy with the World Bank and that there were no data on rural areas. She added that decentralized solutions were insufficient if not complemented by clean fuel, especially modern energy.

3. *Energy-water-food nexus in the Arab region*
(Agenda item 13)

26. Under this item, the Committee considered document [E/ESCWA/C.3/2019/12](#) on the energy-water-food nexus in the Arab region. The representative of the secretariat reviewed the interlinkages between the three sectors, and their challenges and priorities in the region. She noted the key elements for an effective approach to the nexus, namely innovative non-traditional policies, time and economic costs, and participation and coordination under the nexus. She showcased ESCWA activities in support of the nexus, including building member States' capacity to employ the nexus to achieve the SDGs, and the Regional Initiative for Promoting Small-Scale Renewable Energy Applications in Rural Areas of the Arab Region (REGEND). She also listed several measures required to achieve the energy-water-food nexus.

27. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of the secretariat stressed the importance of adopting standardized language in the energy and water fields, and enhancing collaboration and coordination between workers in the two sectors.

4. *Round-table discussion: Energy in national sustainable development plans*
(Agenda item 14)

28. Under this item, the representative of the secretariat presented document [E/ESCWA/C.3/2019/CRP.1](#) on energy's pivotal role in national sustainable development plans. Under three main headings, she addressed several issues related to energy's role in achieving sustainable development under the 2030 Agenda, with a focus on SDG 7 on energy and its target and related SDGs on water, food, productivity, sustainable consumption, and climate change mitigation. She invited representatives of member States to review the challenges facing their countries in the field of energy for development, and to clarify their views on the role of ESCWA in that regard and the role of the League of Arab States from a regional perspective.

29. The representative of Jordan said that the share of crude oil and its derivatives from primary energy sources had reached 54 per cent in his country, while development plans aimed to reduce that share to 51 per cent in 2020. Although the share of renewable energy had been only 8 per cent in 2018, it would reach 10 per cent in 2020. The share of coal had been limited to 3 per cent in 2018. He mentioned the shale power plant project, which would come into operation in 2020. He also reviewed Jordanian projects related to renewable energy sources, whose contribution to generated electricity had reached 11 per cent, up from 1 per cent in 2014. He added that the Government of Jordan also encouraged poor families to use solar energy connected to the main grid. The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources was also implementing a project to operate traditional energy-efficient street lighting to reduce municipal energy costs and shift to a green economy. Moreover, the Ministry was implementing several projects, such as connecting schools to solar energy systems and providing support for solar water heaters. He discussed the national Energy Efficiency Action Plan, aimed at achieving the international commitments of Jordan on mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. He noted the two ESCWA projects developed in collaboration with the Ministry to study the energy efficiency of existing buildings, and discussed REGEND which contributed to empowering rural women and achieving sustainable development.

30. The representative of Bahrain said that the electricity control centre in his country resorted to stations associated with water production to ensure enough water reserves, although at decreased efficiency. The Electricity and Water Authority should diversify energy sources by integrating renewable energy and by conserving resources through improved energy efficiency. He noted that his country had established the Sustainable Energy Unit in 2014, and that the Council of Ministers had endorsed a committee in 2016 to follow up on national work in energy efficiency and renewable energy to increase reliance on clean energy. Bahrain had also adopted the net-metering project, in line with SDG 7. He reviewed the work of the Sustainable Energy Centre, indicating the challenges it faced in training contractors and consultants and building their capacity to implement new projects. The State had undertaken that training responsibility.

31. The representative of Iraq said that it was necessary to establish a body to regulate electricity, as was the case in Jordan. He expressed his wish that ESCWA and Jordan would provide guidance in that regard. He noted that the electricity sector in Iraq faced challenges. In the past, the grid was independent and provided a surplus. However, consecutive crises had destroyed infrastructure, and the electricity supply was now subjected to scheduling, so citizens could not have 24-hour access to electricity without generators. He stressed that it was necessary to develop an energy masterplan, indicating various Iraqi efforts to diversify energy sources and plug the supply deficit by establishing new stations and rehabilitating old ones, and changing specifications. He requested that ESCWA and member States provide guidance and exchange expertise. He confirmed that tackling energy challenges required financial, human and natural resources, which Iraq had a wealth of, but the electricity sector was in need of further regulation.

32. The representative of the Sudan said that beneficiaries from electricity supply had reached 40 per cent in his country in 2016, dropping to 32 per cent in 2019 because the population was growing faster than electricity generation. He added that 54 per cent of energy was generated from reservoirs. He noted that the Sudan was implementing a project to install solar panels atop buildings, and to mainstream them on government buildings. He discussed an energy efficiency project, whose law had been delayed.

33. The representative of Qatar said that her country extracted natural gas for export, and to produce water and electricity. Significant progress was being made in using treated water for cooling. She noted that Qatar had completed a giant emergency reservoir project, and had built 15 reservoirs in various areas. She highlighted her country's efforts to construct environmentally friendly buildings for the World Cup.

34. The representative of Kuwait said that his country had formed a national committee to implement the SDGs. He reviewed several energy projects under implementation in Kuwait, including the Al-Zour refinery project to be implemented in 2020. Kuwait was also implementing projects and initiatives on renewable energy and energy efficiency, including a renewable energy complex comprising three power stations. The first phase of the project, which consisted of three phases, had been completed.

35. The representative of Libya reviewed his country's efforts to achieve progress in the field of energy, including using natural gas to produce clean energy, and prohibiting the import of incandescent light bulbs because of their energy inefficiency. His country was working on an integrated system of infrastructure to increase energy efficiency, and on developing an energy regulator in collaboration with international organizations that would be referred to the President for a decision on its establishment. He said that his country lacked the necessary legislation to undertake renewable energy projects. All cities and communities in Libya were connected to the grid, but were subjected to rationing and intermittent power cuts. He added that generating energy from clean sources was a challenge that the State was working to overcome by installing solar panels in pastoral areas where people lived during specific periods.

36. The representative of Egypt summarized the history of the energy sector in his country, recalling the abundance of fossil fuels in the 1980s; however, the absence of a sustainability perspective had resulted in a deficit in 2014. He said that the State had adopted a sustainability perspective in its national development plan, which covered several issues including energy, following the launch of the 2030 Agenda in 2015. He noted that Egypt had identified promising areas for wind and solar energy, and that the national strategy aimed to increase the share of renewable energy to 42 per cent by 2035, following the allocation of land for renewable energy projects and the reduction of customs duties on necessary equipment. He said that a feed-in tariff law had been enacted to encourage the private sector to invest in wind and solar energy. Egypt had also launched a second action plan for energy efficiency in 2018, and assigned great importance to electricity interconnection with neighbouring countries.

37. The representative of Saudi Arabia said that his country's economy relied significantly on oil. Plans were being developed to increase the share of renewable energy to 30 per cent by 2030, and to attract private sector investment. He said that the Saudi Energy Efficiency Centre had developed clear regulations and standards in that regard. In view of the considerable energy required for air conditioning, the State had placed

restrictions on related customs bodies to vet units entering the market. He stressed that further analysis was necessary to determine the most suitable energy mix for each country and the economic tools required to achieve it, reaffirming that political stability was the biggest challenge facing the region.

38. The representative of Mauritania said that his country was extremely large compared to its population size, where the population did not exceed 1,000 people in over 80 per cent of villages. However, the country had suffered a considerable electricity deficit in 2010. He reviewed a government strategy comprising the following four objectives: increasing production from local renewable energy sources; strengthening and developing the transmission network; increasing the share of renewables in the energy mix; and devising solutions for rural communities. He said that hybrid stations had been established, powered by solar and thermal energy, and that significant challenges in transmission and interconnection across the country needed to be addressed. He confirmed that Mauritania had adopted the energy-water-food nexus, as exemplified by the use of thermal water pumps in agricultural areas.

39. The Director of the Energy Department of the League of Arab States said that the Arab integration project that the League was striving for included several solutions, such as an Arab common market for electricity, stressing the importance of a unified electricity grid among Arab countries that exempted poor and less developed countries from investing considerable sums in establishing power stations, and enabled them to import electricity from neighbouring countries and to supply remote areas. She noted that countries with a wealth of renewables could supply the grid, and that energy efficiency would reduce waste and the need for new stations and lines and would increase the pace of progress towards achieving SDG 7. She said that the desired integration was within reach, especially since 16 Arab States had signed a memorandum of understanding to establish an Arab common market for electricity, thus reflecting the political will for achieving integration. She added that the League of Arab States was preparing three documents, namely a general agreement on the foundations and roles of institutions and the political aspects of an Arab common market, a trade agreement on the commercial aspects of the market, and a system for the network handled by a specialized consulting office. She expressed her hope that Arab decision makers would adopt the documents to achieve the desired progress.

E. PROGRAMMATIC ISSUES

1. *Proposed programme plan for 2020 in the area of integrated natural resource management for sustainable development* (Agenda item 15)

40. Under this item, the Committee considered document [E/ESCWA/C.3/2019/13](#) on the proposed programme plan for 2020 in the area of integrated natural resource management for sustainable development. The representative of the secretariat reviewed the plan, which the ESCWA Executive Committee had endorsed at its fifth meeting (Beirut, 18-19 December 2018) and invited the Committee on Energy to take note thereof. She said that in view of ongoing programme changes, ESCWA was preparing the annual budget in line with the programme of work for 2020.

41. Participants welcomed the proposed programme plan for 2020 and expressed their support for ESCWA in its implementation.

2. *Date and venue of the thirteenth session of the Committee on Energy* (Agenda item 16)

42. The Committee on Energy will hold its thirteenth session at the United Nations House in Beirut in the second quarter of 2021. The exact date will be determined at a later stage.

3. *Other matters* (Agenda item 17)

43. No issues were raised under this item.

4. *Adoption of the recommendations made by the Committee
on Energy at its twelfth session*
(Agenda item 18)

44. Pursuant to article 33 of the ESCWA Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure, at the closing meeting held on 25 June 2019, the Committee on Energy adopted the recommendations made at the twelfth session, as amended.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. DATE AND VENUE

45. The Committee on Energy held its twelfth session at the United Nations House in Beirut on 24 and 25 June 2019.

B. OPENING

46. The representative of Mauritania, in his capacity as Chair of the eleventh session, opened the meeting on 24 June 2019. He welcomed participants and expressed his appreciation for the Committee as a regional platform for collaboration and the exchange of expertise in the field of energy in the Arab region. He also noted the efforts made in preparation for the session.

47. The Director of the ESCWA Sustainable Development Policies Division made a statement on behalf of the secretariat. She said that the 2030 Agenda covered all development dimensions, aimed at ensuring a dignified life for all and at achieving development that left no one behind. The Paris Agreement confirmed the pivotal role of energy in mitigating the impact of climate change, especially in the most affected countries which were typically developing countries. She noted that changes in energy sources reflected a global shift, which contributed to expediting inclusive development. The challenges facing the energy sector in the region included changing lifestyles, increasing refugee numbers and pressure on services, and geopolitical transformations that accompanied the circumstances and events in the region. She stressed that it was necessary to tackle challenges related to the region's over-reliance on fossil fuel, and the weak share of renewables in the energy mix, which posed economic, social and environmental difficulties. Several Arab countries had begun reforming the energy sector at disparate levels. She added that ESCWA was making efforts to assist member States in translating their commitments under the energy-related SDGs into practical measures.

C. ATTENDANCE

48. The session was attended by representatives from 11 of the 18 ESCWA member States, and from the Energy Department of the League of Arab States. Annex I to the present report sets out the list of participants.

D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

49. Rule 18 of the ESCWA Rules of Procedure states: "Member States shall chair the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations.² Unless the Commission decides otherwise, those bodies shall elect all their other officers". In accordance with this rule, the representative of Jordan assumed the Chair of the thirteenth session of the Committee on Energy, and the representatives of Bahrain and Mauritania assumed the positions of Vice-Chair. The representative of Iraq was appointed Rapporteur.

² ESCWA member States in Arabic alphabetical order are as follows: Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, Iraq, Oman, the State of Palestine, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Mauritania and Yemen.

E. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

50. At its first meeting, the Committee on Energy adopted the agenda of its twelfth session as set out in document [E/ESCWA/C.3/2019/L.1](#).

F. DOCUMENTS

51. The list of documents presented to the Committee on Energy at its twelfth session is set out in annex II to the present report.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Bahrain

Mr. Qahtan Hassan Abdul Fares Mohammed
Head of Engineering Services
Electricity and Water Authority

Egypt

Mr. Ahmad Mohammad Mahina
Head of the Central Department
for Monitoring Bodies
Ministry of Electricity and Renewable Energy

Iraq

Mr. Majed Mohammed Abbas Alghanmi
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Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

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