

**Terms of Reference for the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development Taskforce (AFSD TF), one of four taskforces which report directly to the [Working Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).**

**Background:** ESCWA, like all Regional Commissions, has the mandate to organize annual regional multi-stakeholder forums, known as Regional Forums for Sustainable Development, as the main regional mechanisms for FUR reporting to the High Level Political Forum. In line with the ToR<sup>1</sup> of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development (AFSD), endorsed by member States in Doha in 2016, the taskforce under the 2030 WG will carry out functions related to the substantive and logistical preparations of the AFSD and provide joint support towards its implementation.

**Objective:** To ensure the contribution of the members of the 2030 WG to the planning and implementation of the AFSD, whose objectives and functions are detailed in the ToR, and include:

- Providing a multi-stakeholder platform to discuss transnational issues from a perspective that takes into account integration between sectors and that targets government and non-government organizations;
- Engaging Arab countries to share experiences in operationalizing commitments to the goals and principles of the 2030 Agenda through integrated strategies, programmes and policies;
- Designing roadmaps to achieve common regional goals and address emerging challenges, while ensuring consistency between national plans and strategies and regional priorities;
- Strengthening regional and international cooperation to implement, follow up and review the 2030 Agenda, including cooperation between Arab countries and trilateral cooperation, and identify methods to finance development and build strong partnerships between countries and across regions based on peer learning and the exchange of expertise and best practices;
- Exploring means to mobilize implementation methods to achieve the SDGs, including the development of statistical systems, science, research, technology and innovation;
- Fostering a peer learning platform building on Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) experiences and encouraging Arab States to conduct VNRs;
- Consolidating a network of practitioners and resources persons on implementation of the various components of the 2030 Agenda.

**Scope and Function:** The AFSD is convened annually and shall be implemented at least three months prior to the High Level Political Forum. The AFSD TF is composed of members of the 2030 WG and has the following core functions:

- i. **Substantive Planning:** Agree on the thematic focus of the AFSD, and roles and responsibilities of the members. The TF will discuss the concept/design and agenda, and identify inputs including background papers, presentations, issue briefs, etc. Accordingly, the TF will identify resources persons, consultants, speakers and forum participants.
- ii. **Logistical Planning:** Discuss and agree on the proposed date and venue for the AFSD and coordinates the attendance of participants and speakers. While ESCWA usually provides the core resources for AFSD, members may be required to financially support the preparation of substantive input and/or travel and accommodation as necessary. In line with the agreed concept and agenda of the AFSD, TF members may also engage in co-leading relevant side events and/or workshops.
- iii. **AFSD Outcome Report:** Contribute inputs to the Outcome Report of the AFSD, which sets out key messages emanating from the meeting, to be submitted to the HLPF.

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<sup>1</sup> [AFSD ToRs available in the report of the ESCWA 29<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Session](#) (Page 12-13)

- iv. **Follow-up:** Ensure broad dissemination of the AFSD Outcome Report, to serve as a guiding tool for subsequent activities and events. The TF may also consider planning joint side events during the HLPF around the focus and results of the AFSD.

**Membership and Organization:** The AFSD TF is chaired and coordinated by ESCWA and open to all members of the RCM Working Group on the 2030 Agenda interested to contribute to the preparation of the annual Forum. Membership in the TF is on a voluntary basis and may change on an annual basis. The TF will meet at least once per year physically, preferably in January, and as required virtually, earlier and later in the cycle. A detailed AFSD work-plan will be developed in November of each year to serve as the main guiding document for the planning and implementation of the AFSD.

