

I. 2018 Achievements: Highlights of Key Activities since 23rd RCM:

The establishment of the Working Group on Water was approved at the 23rd Meeting of the RCM in November 2017. Members of the RCM interested in contributing to the working group were invited to inform the RCM Secretariat of their designated representative and alternate member.

Four United Nations organizations submitted their nominations to the RCM Secretariat, namely UN Environment, UN-Habitat, UNICEF and the WHO. Other United Nations and League of Arab States organizations have expressed their interest in participating in the working group, but formal designations have not yet been received.

These expressions of interest were voiced and demonstrated during the “Regional Preparatory Meeting on Water Issues for the 2018 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and High Level Political Forum,” which was held at UN House/Beirut from 28 to 29 March 2018. The meeting was jointly organized by ESCWA, FAO and the League of Arab States in partnership with ACSAD, AOAD, UN Environment and regional organizations as per resolution of the Arab Ministerial Water Council. Interventions were provided by IOM, UNESCO, UNICEF and the WHO. Over sixty representatives participated in the meeting, which resulted in a joint outcome document that was approved and attached as an annex to the AFSD’s submission to the HLPF.

The working group’s approved terms of reference were translated from English to Arabic and approved by League of Arab States counterparts. A working group webpage was created under the RCM site.

Funding to facilitate the organization of the first meeting of the working group (interpretation, hospitality) was secured by ESCWA through UN-Water in light of its support for inter-agency regional coordination mechanisms on water.

II. Main Activities and Outputs Planned for 2018 - 2019:

The date of the first meeting of the working group has been preliminarily set for **26-27 November 2018** in Cairo, based on consultations between ESCWA and the League of Arab States Secretariat. The meeting will discuss proposals that were initially conceived during the United Nations-League of Arab States Sector Coordination Meeting on Water in October 2017. It will also identify proposed areas for joint cooperation on the SDGs identified as focus areas in 2019, namely SDG 4 (education), 8 (economic growth), 10 (inequality), 13 (climate change), 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies) and 17 (partnerships).

III. Decisions Requested from the Members of the RCM (if any):

Interested United Nations and League of Arab States organizations are kindly invited to designate a member and alternate representative to serve on the working group. To facilitate this process, nominations can be sent by emailing ESCWA at the following address: escwa-h2o@un.org Nominations received by 15 November 2018 will be invited to participate in the first meeting of the working group.