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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Expert Group Meeting on “The Role of Energy Networks
in Regional Integration”
Beirut, 22-23 December 2009

INFORMATION NOTE

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is organizing an Expert Group Meeting on “The Role of Energy Networks in Regional Integration”, to be held at the UN House premises/ESCWA, on 22 and 23 December 2009, Beirut, Lebanon.

1. Basic information

The cooperation in the energy field is considered as one of the fundamental themes in international relations, and for the past fifty years, more than one region in the world has witnessed oriented support towards regional cooperation by interconnecting the electricity networks and establishment of gas networks. The energy sector in the Arab region, including the ESCWA region, is considered as the main sector contributing to the development needs and national economies of many countries, but the availability of energy resources of oil and gas varies between countries in the region, and the demand for electric power is increasing significantly. This represents a major challenge for countries in the region, and requires motivating the cooperation among them to achieve integration in the provision of their needs for energy and electricity resources. Therefore, during the past two decades, the Arab States took into consideration proceeding with the adoption of policies and procedures necessary to strengthen regional cooperation in the field of energy, particularly in the electricity and gas sectors, since the expansion of the electricity networks and optimizing the use of natural gas reserves consist a strategic investment that can achieve economic integration among Arab countries, and facilitate their integration into the global energy markets, especially the European ones.

The Arab countries have made constant efforts in this area, which were reflected in planning and implementing several electrical interconnection projects, in particular: The Eight Electrical Interconnection Project, the GCC Electrical Interconnection project, the Maghreb Electrical Interconnection project...etc., and in the area of gas networks, there is the Arab gas pipeline project, the Dolphin project, the Maghreb & European Union pipeline project....etc.

The reaffirmation of the Arab leaders on the importance of energy networks projects was reflected in the «Kuwait Declaration – Upgrading the standard of living of the Arab citizen, issued by the Arab Economic and Social Development Summit in Kuwait on January 20, 2009», on «strengthening Arab cooperation in the field of energy, as a means to achieve sustainable development and enhancing the existing electricity networks of the Arab electricity, and the establishment of Arab market for electric power, as well as enhancing the natural gas networks and its expansion, etc. ... ».

During this summit, a decision was issued to expedite the finalization of the Arab electricity interconnection projects and completion of projects in progress, and taking the necessary actions to clear all outstanding obstacles facing its implementation, and demanding the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development to continue its support in funding the implementation of such projects, involving the private sector in relevant projects, and establishing an Arab market for electric power.

ESCWA, since its inception, supported its Member Countries in building efforts and adopting cooperation policies on energy for sustainable development. ESCWA, within this context, published in 1999, a study on «The modalities of cooperation in the field of electrical interconnection between ESCWA member countries». Energy, especially electricity and gas as a cleaner fuel, is considered as one of the essential foundations for economic and social growth in the region, Therefore, following up on the developments and progress in regional cooperation in the energy field in the Arab region, whether in electrical or gas networks, is of utmost importance, as it is in all regions of the world.

2. Objective and Topics of the Meeting

The Expert Group Meeting aims to present and discuss the role of energy networks in regional integration and the progress achieved in this area in the ESCWA region, in particular, and the Arab region in general, with a focus on electricity and gas networks, and to highlight the lessons learned and regional experiences and future projects aimed at strengthening its role.

The meeting will focus on the following topics:

- (a) The importance of regional cooperation in the field of electricity and gas networks in support of sustainable development;
- (b) The role of energy networks in the conservation of the environment and climate change mitigation;
- (c) The current situation and future plans for electricity grids projects in the region;
- (d) The Inter-regional cooperation in the field of energy networks «interconnection between the regional networks in the Arab region and neighboring regions networks»;
- (e) The role of the electricity interconnection grids and regional cooperation in promoting renewable energy applications for large-scale electricity production;
- (f) The current situation and future plans for gas networks in the region;
- (g) The potentials for achieving integration between electricity and gas networks to promote development and regional cooperation;
- (h) Review of national papers on the energy networks, available possibilities and future projects;
- (i) The obstacles facing regional integration in energy networks;
- (j) The legislative and institutional frameworks to overcome obstacles and enhance the role of energy networks in achieving regional integration.

3. Participants

Representatives from Arab countries, research centers and universities, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and concerned regional and international organizations will participate in the Meeting; the following will also be invited:

- (a) National experts representing bodies concerned with the topic of this Meeting from Arab countries;
- (b) Representatives from the Arab organizations, United Nations organizations, and concerned Regional and International organizations;
- (c) Members of ESCWA's Committee on energy, and representatives of the national focal points for the Regional Mechanism on the Development of Energy Uses for Sustainable Development;
- (d) Renowned experts in the fields covered by the Meeting;
- (e) Community based and civil society organizations working in the field of energy and regional integration.

4. Date and Venue

The Expert Group Meeting will be held at the UN House premises/ESCWA, on 22 and 23 December 2009, Beirut, Lebanon. Registration is on 22 December at 9:00 A.M, and the opening session shall be at 10:A.M same day.

5. Language of the Meeting

Papers could be presented in either Arabic or English; simultaneous interpretation from and to each of the two languages is available.

6. Accommodation and Transportation

ESCWA will bear the expenses of participation in the Meeting for only one official representative form each member country. Participation expenses-for the nominated representatives only- include the established Daily Subsistence Allowance in Beirut for a period of three days (one day for travel and two days for the Meeting), in addition to USD 152 to cover the terminal expenses, ESCWA will also be providing airline reservations and an economy class two-way airline ticket. ESCWA also welcomes the participation of additional experts, given that their respective countries sponsor their participation. Regional and international observers wishing to participate should do so at their own expenses.

Each participant shall undertake the following preparations related to his participation: Securing hotel reservation and means of transportation within Beirut, Lebanon.

7. Entry Visas

All participants should obtain an entry visa to Lebanon from the Lebanese embassy in their countries. Detailed information on visas can be accessed at the website of the Lebanese Directorate General of Public Security: <http://www.general-security.gov.lb>.

If necessary, and for special cases, ESCWA can assist in obtaining an entry visa to Lebanon; therefore, participants wishing so, should send a colored photocopy of their passport containing all necessary

information to ESCWA. All participants are required to fill out the attached form and send it to either of the contacts listed below, no later than 4 December 2009.

8. *Correspondence*

All correspondence related to the Meeting is to be sent to either of the two addresses:

Dr. Anhar Hegazi Director Sustainable Development and Productivity Division P.O.Box: 11-8575 Riad El Solh Square ESCWA Beirut, Lebanon Telephone (Direct): 961-1-978502 Facsimile: 961-1-981510 E-mail: hegazi@un.org	Dr. Walid Deghaili Chief, Energy Section Sustainable Development and Productivity Division P.O.Box: 11-8575 Riad El Solh Square ESCWA Beirut, Lebanon Telephone (Direct): 961-1-978527 Facsimile: 961-1-981510 E-mail: degghaili@un.org
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“The role of Energy Networks in Regional Integration”**

Beirut, Lebanon, 22-23 December 2009



Registration Form

Country /Organization:	: /
Participant's Name <u>as written in the Passport</u>	: _____
Place and date of birth:	:
Job title:	:
Postal address:	:
Tel.:	:
Cellular:	:
Fax.:	:
E-mail:	:
Website:	:

**Kindly fill in the form in a readable handwriting & send it to the contact points not later than
4 December 2009**