Your Excellency Dr. Lina Shabeb, Minister of Transport of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Your Excellency Dr. Taher Shakhshir, Minister of Environment of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Mr. Mohamed Semawi, Director-General of the Jordanian Meteorological Department
Mr. Hocine Souidi, Head of the Climate and Meteorology Division of the League of Arab States
Dr. Rupa Kumar Kolli, Chief of the World Climate Applications and Services Division at World Meteorological Organization
Distinguished Director-Generals and Representatives from Arab Meteorological Services, Esteemed Climate Experts,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to welcome you to this Scoping Meeting for the Establishment of the Arab Climate Outlook Forum, which is conducted under the framework of the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR).

As many of you are aware, RICCAR is implemented through a collaborative partnership involving the League of Arab States, the United Nations, and specialized organizations serving the Arab region. In all, 11 partner organizations contribute to the work of RICCAR, namely the LAS, ACSAD, ESCWA, FAO, GIZ, SMHI, UNEP, UNESCO, UNISDR, UNU and, of course, the WMO, who is leading the organization of this consultation with you today.
Additionally, three climate research institutes have joined the initiative to lend their expertise on climate change modelling, and particularly regional climate modelling for the Arab Domain, under the coordination of the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI). This includes the Center of Excellence for Climate Change Research at the King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia.

Funding for RICCAR is provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), as well as the RICCAR partners. Special thanks are extended to Sida for funding this important meeting, and to the Jordanian Meteorological Department of the Ministry of Transport for graciously hosting us here in Amman under the patronage of His Excellency Dr. Abdullah Ensour, the Prime Minister of Jordan.

Distinguished Colleagues,

As already indicated, this Scoping Meeting for the establishment of an Arab Climate Outlook Forum is conducted in response to the resolution adopted by the Arab Permanent Committee for Meteorology in Kuwait in March 2014. The meeting aims to provide a consultative forum to discuss the potential functions, outputs and institutionalization of an ArabCOF that can provide regional climate services as well coordinate data needs and capacity development requirements for Arab Meteorological Services.

This gathering also provide an excellent opportunity to engage you – the LAS and WMO Permanent Representatives for Meteorology, and their designated representatives – in a substantive discussion on the availability of climate change information and the findings of regional climate modelling projection covering Arab countries. We thus hope that your deliberations on the development of an ArabCOF also consider the importance of institutionalizing a mechanism for the continuous review and updating of regional climate modelling projections for the Arab Domain, as adopted by the Coordinated Regional Climate Downscaling Experiment (CORDEX) of the World Climate Research Program. In doing so, your views and ideas on how the RICCAR Regional Knowledge Hub on climate and water could facilitate the work of an ArabCOF and interactions among Arab Meteorological Services on regional climate modelling would be welcomed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The organization of this regional consultation is timely given the heightened attention being paid to climate change today. Less than three weeks ago, over 100 Heads of State met in New York City at the Climate Summit convened by the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon to catalyze action on climate change. The commitments of countries and key stakeholder groups on a range of sectors, including agriculture, water, cities, forests, energy, transport and finance, demonstrate the demand for climate information and the need to provide climate services that can inform policy, planning and implementation on climate change at the global, regional and national levels.

Arab Countries thus need the information, assessments and analysis required to pursue climate change adaptation, inform coordinated responses to extreme weather events, and foster regional consensus on negotiation positions adopted by Arab
countries, particularly as your Governments prepare for negotiations being undertaken at the UNFCCC COP-20 meeting in Peru this year, and the UNFCCC COP-21 meeting in Paris next year. These negotiations are expected to focus on climate change mitigation, adaptation as well as the prevention and response to climate-related disasters. The establishment of an ArabCOF aimed at sustaining regional dialogue for regional climate prediction and climate change projection is thus important not only for each of you at the national level, but also for the Arab region as a whole.

Distinguished Representatives,

I would like to extend my thanks again to the Government of Jordan for hosting us here in Amman and for the efforts exerted by my colleagues at the League of Arab States, the World Meteorological Organization, the Jordanian Meteorological Department and at ESCWA for making this meeting possible. Finally, I extend my sincere appreciation to you, the representatives of Arab Meteorological Services and associated climate experts, for your participation in this strategic consultation.

I wish you productive deliberations and a pleasant stay in Amman.

Thank you.