Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Arab Regional Implementation Meeting for the Twentieth Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-20) – Follow-up on Rio+20
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 29-30 May 2013

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA

**DAY 1: Wednesday, 29th May**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>08:00 – 08:30</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<td>08:30 – 09:30</td>
<td>Opening ceremony: Welcome and opening statements</td>
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<td>The session will consist of statements delivered by high-level representatives from the host country (United Arab Emirates), and the organizing partners, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the League of Arab States (LAS), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).</td>
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<td>09:30 – 10:30</td>
<td>Morning Tea/Coffee Break</td>
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<td>10:30 – 12:30</td>
<td>Session 1: Overview on the implications of the major outcomes from Rio+20 for the Arab region</td>
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<td><strong>Background</strong></td>
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<td>The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 (known as Rio+20) renewed the international community’s political commitment to sustainable development and assessed progress and implementation gaps and new and emerging challenges. The outcome document for the conference, entitled <em>The Future We Want</em>, sets the global agenda for sustainable development over the coming years and includes a number of key outcomes with implications for the Arab region, in particular: the establishment of a high-level political forum (HLPF) for sustainable development; a process to develop Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the adoption of green economy as a tool to achieve sustainable development; and new commitments relating to means of implementation and thematic issues. The implications of these outcomes for the Arab region are still unfolding and it is important that the region takes stock of this emerging international framework and the opportunities and challenges it presents for the region. It is also critical that the region remains engaged in international negotiations and processes that are shaping these key outcomes, including the CSD-20, the HLPF, the Open Working Group for the development of the SDGs, and the intergovernmental committee for developing a financing strategy for sustainable development.</td>
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Objectives and Format
The objective of this session is to briefly explore the main outcomes from Rio+20 and their implications for the Arab region, some of which will be explored in more detail in subsequent sessions. The session will commence with an overview of the agenda and approach for the meeting and desired outcomes. An expert presentation will then follow that will outline the main outcomes from Rio+20 and their implications for the Arab region. The presentation will draw out the implications, challenges and opportunities and highlight some key issues that will need to be considered by Arab countries during the RIM, including priorities for the region, enhancing regional coordination and engagement in intergovernmental processes, and accelerate implementation and integration at the regional and national levels. The presentation will briefly address the key Rio+20 outcomes and implications and set the stage for a more in-depth exploration of the issues in the subsequent sessions. A multi-stakeholder panel will then be invited to provide their initial views on Rio+20, addressing the key processes of interest to the region and how to facilitate engagement and input from the region. Interventions from the floor will then be invited. Discussions will be guided by a set of discussion questions.

Background Papers:
- *The Future We Want* – outcome document from Rio+20;
- Arab RIM background paper on implications of Rio+20 for the Arab region;
- Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting report.

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 – 15:15
Session 2: Sustainable Development Goals and Post-2015

Background
An important outcome from Rio+20 was the agreement to develop a new set of SDGs to succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015. The goals should address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, environment, social) and their inter-linkages. The outcome document did not identify the areas to be addressed by the SDGs, however it underscored that they should be action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries. They should also be based on the outcomes of previous global summits and coherent with, and integrated into, the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.

The SDGs will be established through an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process open to all stakeholders, with a view to having them agreed by the General Assembly. An Open Working Group was constituted in January 2013 which includes representatives from the Arab region (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates). A report is due to be submitted to the General Assembly at its 68th session (2013/14), containing a proposal for sustainable development goals for consideration and appropriate action.

Objectives and Format
The objective of this session is to discuss the SDGs and their implications for the Arab region, with a view to identifying key concerns and priorities from a regional perspective. The session will include expert presentations on key issues for consideration for the SDGs and post-2015 agenda for the Arab region. A multi-stakeholder panel discussion will follow focusing on identifying regional priorities, exploring options for enhancing regional engagement with international processes and how the League of Arab States (LAS) and UN organizations can help to facilitate engagement. Interventions from the floor will then be invited. Discussions will be guided by a set of discussion questions.
Background papers:
- Arab RIM working paper on key issues for consideration for the SDGs and post-2015 agenda for the Arab region;
- Reports from regional, national and thematic consultations undertaken in the region in the context of post-2015.

15:15 to 15:30  Afternoon tea/coffee break

15:30 – 17:00  Session 3: A green economy roadmap for the Arab region

Background
The Rio+20 outcome agreed to frame the green economy as one of the important tools available for achieving sustainable development. This recognises that the green economy is not meant to replace the concept of sustainable development, but should be used to contribute to, or progress, this broader agenda. Countries acknowledged that green economy policies will enhance our ability to manage natural resources sustainably with lower negative environmental impacts, increase resource efficiency and reduce waste. Countries are encouraged in the outcome document to implement green economy policies that drive sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and job creation, particularly for women, youth and the poor, whilst also reducing the impact on the Earth’s ecosystems. To assist developing countries to implement green economy policies, international cooperation should also be promoted, including the provision of means of implementation for developing countries through capacity building, finance and technology transfer.

At its meeting in December 2012, CAMRE agreed to a way forward for implementation of the green economy in the Arab region and requested that ESCWA and UNEP prepare a report on green economy priorities for the Arab region and an investment road map.

Objectives and Format
This session will discuss how to move forward on the implementation of green economy at the national and regional levels in the Arab region. Presentations will focus on recent regional analysis and initiatives undertaken in the Arab region, as well as on work undertaken to date towards understanding priority policy options and the investment potential for green economy in the Arab region. These presentations will feed into a panel discussion of regional and national priorities for implementing the green economy, options for financing green economy policies, and key barriers that need to be overcome for a green economy roadmap. Discussions will be guided by a set of discussion questions and interventions will be invited from the floor.

Background papers:
- Background note on a green economy roadmap for the Arab region;
- Other relevant reference materials including relevant reports from ESCWA, UNEP, ILO, AFED, UNESCAP and others.

17:00  Concluding Remarks and Close Day 1
19:00  Gala dinner hosted by the Government of the UAE
**DAY 2: Thursday, 30 May –**

**Session 4: Institutional framework for sustainable development: global, regional and national inter-linkages**

**Background**

In the Rio+20 outcome document, governments agreed to a HLPF for sustainable development which shall be responsible for follow-up on the implementation of sustainable development and subsequently replace the Commission on Sustainable Development. Its format and organizational aspects are being determined through an intergovernmental negotiation process under the General Assembly which will conclude in May, with the aim of convening the first HLPF at the beginning of the 68th session of the General Assembly in September 2013. In addition, governments agreed to strengthen UNEP and the first Universal Governing Council was held earlier this year.

The outcome document also underscored the importance of a strengthened institutional framework for sustainable development at the national and regional levels which integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner, responds to current and future challenges and bridges gaps in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. As part of the Rio+20 follow-up, now is an ideal time to take stock of this framework and explore options for enhancing integration and accelerating progress on sustainable development in the Arab region.

Regional initiatives for sustainable development in the Arab region have been monitored and coordinated under the auspices of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), its Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR), and its Technical Secretariat comprised of the LAS, ESCWA and UNEP. A range of other regional institutions also exist that support implementation across the region. At the national level, most countries in the Arab region have also established ministries for the environment which often take the lead on sustainable development issues. However, there are ongoing challenges at both the regional and national levels with regard to integrated decision-making that embraces all dimensions of sustainable development.

**Objectives and Format**

The objective of the session is to provide an overview of the emerging global institutional framework for sustainable development and its regional and national inter-linkages, and explore opportunities for enhancing Arab regional and national institutions for sustainable development so that they better engage with international processes, and better facilitate implementation of sustainable development and integrated decision making.

The session will include an overview presentation on the emerging international framework sustainable development, lessons learned from CSD, and the status of global processes and how they link to the SDGs and post-2015 agenda. An expert presentation will then explore options for enhancing regional institutions for sustainable development with a view to enhancing linkages at the international level as well as accelerating progress and integration at the regional and national levels. A multi-stakeholder panel discussion will then follow on options for enhancing regional institutions for sustainable development in the post-Rio+20 context. Interventions from the floor will then be invited. Discussions will be guided by a set of discussion questions.

**Background Papers:**
- Arab RIM background paper on regional and national institutions for sustainable development in the Arab region.

**11:00 – 11:15  Morning tea/coffee break**
Background
The Arab Declaration to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and The Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region (SDIAR), presented at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, have provided the regional framework for coordinated action on sustainable development over the last decade. Focused activities have since been implemented through an Action Plan on promoting peace and security, strengthening the institutional framework, supporting poverty alleviation and addressing other regional priorities related to population and health; education, awareness, scientific research and technology transfer; natural resources management; sustainable production and consumption patterns; as well as globalization, trade and investment.

Three progress reports have been prepared to date on the SDIAR. The latest report was prepared in October 2011 at the request of CAMRE and as an input to the regional preparatory process for Rio+20. There is now a need to update the SDIAR to reflect the changes to the global framework and priorities for sustainable development as agreed at Rio+20. In this context, work has commenced on reviewing and updating the SDIAR to address key ongoing and emerging economic, social and environmental challenges and opportunities for the Arab region, including food, energy and water security, climate change, peace and security, unemployment, poverty eradication and other issues. Any updated or revised SDIAR will also need to take into account the emerging global SDGs and how they might best be adopted, implemented and measured in the Arab region.

At the national level, several countries in the Arab region have also shown significant leadership in developing national responses and implementation arrangements for Rio+20 commitments. These leading examples can provide insights and lessons for other countries in the region.

Objectives and Format
The objective of this session is to discuss the proposal for updating the SDIAR, key regional priorities that should be addressed, and to showcase some leading national case studies on implementation of sustainable development in the post-Rio+20 context. The session will include an expert presentation on the SDIAR as well as country presentations on their national initiatives. A panel discussion will focus on regional and national initiatives for sustainable development in the Arab region, including the establishment of an effective regional mechanism for implementing sustainable development and how governments can best assess and implement their sustainable development priorities. Discussions will be guided by a set of discussion questions and interventions will be invited from the floor.

Background Papers:
- Arab RIM background paper on a draft proposal to update the SDIAR.

13:00 – 15:00 Lunch & Side Event on Sustainable Consumption and Production (UNEP)

15:00 – 17:00 Closing session: Discussion of RIM outcome document and report

This session will present and discuss the outcome and recommendations for the Arab RIM to be communicated to CSD-20. The final outcome document resulting from this session will also serve to inform international discussions at the HLPF as well as the SDGs and post-2015 processes. The outcome document will also serve as a key reference document for implementation of Rio+20 outcomes in the Arab region and ongoing engagement of the region in international intergovernmental processes. Concluding remarks will be invited from organizing partners.

----- MEETING CLOSE -----