



# ESCWA Weekly News

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## Seal the Deal on Climate Change

There is no Time to Waste:



This motto spearheads the United Nations campaign “Seal the Deal”, which was launched to mobilize public opinion and influence world leaders and negotiators who will come together on 7 December in Copenhagen, Denmark, to act on climate change.

The main concern of this world forum will be how to protect the planet and create a green economy that will eventually lead to long-term prosperity. The meeting concludes on 18 December, and reaching a deal by then will be determined by complex political negotiations and public pressure from around the globe.

The UN takes climate change very seriously. In fact, just this week, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon took a trip to the Arctic, Norway, to have a first-hand experience of what is happening there. Noting the gravity of the situation, he appealed to the world for urgent measures to be taken to combat climate change and protect the planet for future generations. “We must stop this from further happening,” Ban said while standing on a rapidly melting polar ice. “Unless we fight climate change, unless we stop this trend, we’ll have devastating consequences for humanity,” he added.

Climate change is a universal matter, but its effects are unevenly felt throughout the planet. The

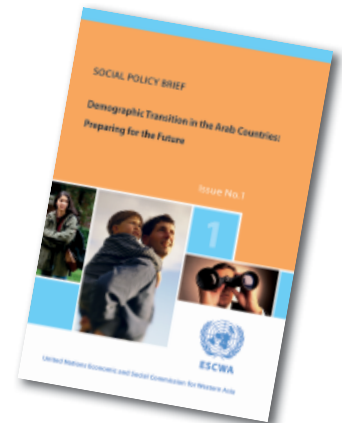
ESCWA region is one of those disproportionately affected by Climate Change (CC). The region bears responsibility for only 3 percent of the world’s CO2 emissions, but it will experience the full spectrum of CC consequences. Sustained CC will make the region drier and warmer, reduce its biodiversity, increase the spread of pests and wildfires and raise the level of its sea water, which could cause inundation of low lands and deltas in the region. Some of these effects have already started showing.

Studies by the regional commission indicate that “the ESCWA region is already witnessing a change in drought, and flooding cycles and cyclones like Gonu in Oman.” Studies

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## ESCWA Publications



### Demographic Transition in the Arab Countries: Preparing for the Future

“The Arab countries, characterized by their broad-based population pyramid, are approaching a major shift in the age structure of the population, whereby the previously dominant 0-14 age group begins to shrink while another group, that of youth and working-age population, will be expanding”. This is one of the findings of the ESCWA-issued

## ESCWA Publications (Cont.)

publication on the demographic transition in the Arab countries. The first part in a series of three publications, the brief delves into the demographic window in the Arab world and the general framework for benefiting from the demographic dividend.

This Social Policy Brief was prepared by ESCWA Population and Social Development Section on the occasion of the 15th Anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) that was held in Cairo in 1994. That con-

ference marked a shift towards a new approach, stressing the interrelationships between population and development and the fulfilment of human needs as one of the human rights, and considering people as both the end and means of development. In view of that, population policies began to be perceived in a new ideological framework based on the principles of human rights, and the belief that the quality of life of the population, not its size, was the basis for formulating population policies. ■

## UNESCO World Heritage Sites in ESCWA Region



Bahrain: Qal'at al-Bahrain; Date of Inscription: 2005  
Photo from [www.gateholidays.com](http://www.gateholidays.com)

Qal'at al-Bahrain is a typical tal – an artificial mound created by many successive layers of human settlement. The strata of the 300 × 600 m tal testify to continuous human presence from about 2300 BC to the 16th Century AD. About 25 percent of the site has been excavated, revealing structures of different types - residential, public, commercial, religious and military. They testify to the importance of the site, which was a trading port over the centuries. On the top of the 12-m high mound there is the impressive Portuguese fort, which gave the whole site its name, qal'a (fort). The site was the capital of the Dilmun, one of the most important ancient civilizations of the region. It contains the richest remains inventoried of this civilization, which was hitherto only known from written Sumerian records. (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization-UNESCO) ■

## Seal the Deal on Climate Change (Cont.)

**There is no Time to Waste:**

**STAMP YOUR VOTE AND SEAL THE DEAL!**



by the Water Resources Section in ESCWA reveal that “Rising temperatures are affecting agricultural productivity, whereas rainfall is less frequent and more intense, and there is a shift in seasons”.

The region is expected to face more flash floods, which may result in damage to water infrastructure. The region also faces added challenges due to the uncertainties of the consequences of CC, the lack of reliable data on the matter, inadequate capacity building on relevant issues, and the absence of modelling techniques.

The region needs to establish reliable climate databases that could furnish information to scientists and planners, allowing them to carry out vulnerability assessments and establish adaptation measures.

A relentless advocate of sound policies in the region, ESCWA is involved in adaptation to and mitigation of CC in different sectors. In the water sector, for example, it is preparing studies on adaptation to CC for member countries and looking into measures these countries can integrate in their national development policies and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) plans. On another level, it is also working on

advocacy for renewable energy projects, energy efficiency and clean fuels, as well as promoting its application in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the effects of CC.

Through its cooperation with the League of Arab States, the UN Environment Programme and other organizations, the Commission has effectively contributed to galvanizing the political will, and within its work programme efforts were devoted for supporting member countries in facing CC as expressed in the Arab Declaration on CC. Meetings on the development of methodology for the water sector vulnerability assessment in this part of the world will be held in coordination with partner organizations and an action plan for the entire Arab world on CC adaptation measures will be developed. Other activities also include the sustainable transport and CC as well as promoting large-scale renewable energy applications in the Arab region as an approach for climate change mitigation.

It is worth noting that nine out of every 10 disasters recorded are now climate-related. Climate change affects us all, and there is little time to lose in acting on it. ■

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