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Committee on Water Resources
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Item 7 (a) of the provisional agenda

**ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE FIELD OF WATER RESOURCES SINCE
THE NINTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE
COMMITTEE AT ITS NINTH SESSION**

Summary

The Committee on Water Resources was established pursuant to resolution 205 (XVIII) adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) on 25 May 1995, and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 26/1995 of 24 July 1995, in recognition of the vital role of the water resources sector in the economic and social development of the countries of the region. The Committee helps in setting priorities for the programme of work of ESCWA in the field of water resources, in supporting member countries in the implementation of recommendations made at regional and international conferences and in fostering intraregional cooperation.

The Committee convenes its sessions biannually. It held its ninth session in Beirut from 23 to 25 March 2011, and members of the Committee addressed recommendations to member countries and to the ESCWA secretariat. The Water Resources Section of the Sustainable Development and Productivity Division at ESCWA is responsible for carrying out work in that field. This document presents actions and activities undertaken by ESCWA pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee on Water Resources at its ninth session.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCWaM	Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region
ACSAD	Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands
ACWUA	Arab Countries Water Utilities Association
AMWC	Arab Ministerial Water Council
BGR	Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe (Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources)
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CAMRE	Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment
CEDARE	Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe
COP18	Eighteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
RCM	Regional Coordination Mechanism
RICCAR	Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region
Rio+20	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
SEEAW	System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP/ROWA	United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for West Asia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

**RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES
AT ITS NINTH SESSION AND MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THEM**

1. At its ninth session held in Beirut, 23-25 March 2011, the Committee on Water Resources issued recommendations addressed to the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and others addressed to ESCWA member countries, which are contained in the report of the Committee on its ninth session (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2011/IG.1/8/Report). The present document reviews actions and activities undertaken by ESCWA to implement the recommendations pertaining to its work. The relevant implementation measures for each recommendation are presented below.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO ESCWA

Recommendation (a)

Continue to support the work of the Technical Scientific Advisory Committee of the Arab Ministerial Water Council (AMWC) in implementing its programmes, especially in the follow-up of the recommendations and decisions concerning ESCWA activities in the field of climate change, Millennium Development Goals and shared water resources in the Arab region.

Measures taken

A. REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS AND MEETINGS

2. As a member of the Technical Scientific and Advisory Committee of the Arab Ministerial Water Council (AMWC), ESCWA participated in the following meetings: (a) the fourth session of the Committee (Cairo, 24-26 April 2011); (b) the fifth session of the Committee and the fifth session of the Executive Bureau of the Ministerial Council (Cairo, 15-17 January and 18 January 2012); and (c) the seventh session of the Committee (Cairo, 13-15 January 2013).

3. During the sessions of the Committee, ESCWA reported on the follow-up to the resolutions of the Arab Summit for Economic and Social Development, including the Arab Water Security Strategy and five integrated water resources management projects. In addition, ESCWA reported on how the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socioeconomic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR) contributes to the third integrated water resources management project on Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources in the Arab Region. In doing so, ESCWA discussed the progress made, partnerships forged and funding secured to support the implementation of the project.

4. As requested by AMWC in its first session (Algeria, June 2009), ESCWA is leading an initiative to establish a regional mechanism to monitor progress towards the achievement of the water and sanitation targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the Arab region (MDG+ Initiative). The initiative is being implemented in partnership with the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA), and in consultation with the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), the Arab Water Council, and the Arab Network for Environment and Development and the World Health Organisation (WHO). ESCWA regularly reports to the Committee on progress achieved in implementing the MDG+ Initiative, which has included preparing the questionnaire template, coordinating with partners and securing funding for project implementation. In turn, the Committee issued recommendations calling on countries to nominate focal points to implement the initiative.

5. In addition, ESCWA supported AMWC and the League of Arab States Center for Water Studies and Arab Water Security in implementing AMWC resolution 20 on the preparation of a legal framework for shared water resources in the Arab region. ESCWA contributed to the reports to the fourth and fifth sessions of the Technical Scientific and Advisory Committee, and delivered a presentation to the AMWC Executive Bureau at its fifth session. The progress reports presented the findings and recommendations of the three

intergovernmental consultative meetings held in May 2011, December 2011 and December 2012, organized by ESCWA and the Center for Water Studies and Arab Water Security with the support of the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe (BGR)). During the seventh session, the Committee recommended that discussions of the draft legal framework continue.

6. ESCWA also took part in the third ministerial session of AMWC (Cairo, 15-16 June 2011), during which several resolutions were adopted, requesting ESCWA to follow-up on activities related to regional cooperation in the water sector as follows: (a) integrated water resources management, and specifically RICCAR; (b) regional monitoring and reporting on water supply and sanitation based on MDGs; and (c) the preparation of a legal framework on shared water resources in the Arab region.

7. At the fifth session of the Technical Scientific and Advisory Committee in January 2012, ESCWA was requested to serve on the working group established to prepare the Arab Water Security Strategy Action Plan. The Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) was mandated to lead the working group. On 22 March 2012, ESCWA hosted the first meeting of the Arab Water Security Strategy Action Plan Working Group at the United Nations house in Beirut. Subsequently, ESCWA contributed to the drafting of the template and chapters of the action plan, including the chapters on climate change, water supply and sanitation and shared water resources.

B. REGIONAL PROJECTS

8. Two regional projects are supporting AMWC in the areas of climate change impact assessment, vulnerability assessment and adaptation as they relate to the water sector. The first is entitled Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources in the Arab Region. The project aims to consolidate the efforts of Arab countries to assess the negative impacts of climate change and to develop strategies and policies to adapt and reduce the expected impact specifically on water resources, and in general on agricultural production, the environment and socioeconomic development. The project is being implemented and reported upon to AMWC through RICCAR, and ESCWA will work with partner organizations and institutions to ensure the implementation of its planned activities. Within that context, ESCWA organized a series of workshops and expert group meetings with Arab Governments, partner organizations and donors to support project implementation.

9. The second project is an initiative of the German Agency for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)) and ESCWA, which will support and contribute to RICCAR. The project entitled “Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region” (ACCWaM) includes the League of Arab States and ACSAD among its partners.

10. As requested by AMWC, ESCWA is leading the implementation of the MDG+ Initiative, which seeks to establish a regional knowledge platform that provides reliable data, information and analysis on the quantity and quality of access to water services in the region. The project supports global and regional deliberation on the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, and emphasizes the importance of regional specificities and challenges when monitoring, reporting and pursuing the achievement of sustainable development goals.

C. STUDIES AND TECHNICAL MATERIALS

11. To strengthen the capacity of Arab countries in the management of shared water resources and to report on regional developments in that area, the Commission prepared the “ESCWA Water Development Report 4: National Capacities for the Management of Shared Water Resources in ESCWA Member Countries” (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2011/4). The report focused on national and regional capacity for the management of shared water resources, and particularly on the preparation of a draft legal framework for shared water resources management in the region. The report reflected recent regional institutional and legal

developments in order to identify the gaps and clarify the prospects for cooperation on shared water resources. In principle, the report focused on ESCWA member countries, but its scope was extended to cover the entire Arab region.

12. An Arabic-English glossary of common terminology used in shared water resources management entitled “Glossary of Shared Water Resources, Technical, Socioeconomic and Legal Terminology” (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2012/Glossary) was prepared within the framework of ESCWA-BGR Cooperation. The glossary includes technical, socioeconomic and legal terms and is intended for specialists, decision makers and negotiators from ESCWA member countries. Adopting a unified terminology is crucial to harmonize the understanding of technical, socioeconomic, environmental, institutional and legal issues related to the joint management of shared water resources. The glossary was distributed to AMWC Committee members at its seventh session in January 2013.

Recommendation (b)

Provide the members of the Committee on Water Resources with copies of the different AMWC decisions concerning ESCWA; and provide member countries with soft copies of the reports prepared by ESCWA on the follow-up to the Council decisions within an appropriate time frame.

Measures taken

13. The resolutions of the third ministerial session of AMWC held during June 2011 were sent to the members of the Committee on Water Resources. In addition, ESCWA efforts to follow up on AMWC resolutions were featured in its interim progress report and mid-point consultation with Committee members or their delegated representatives in June 2012 in Beirut, on the sidelines of the Intergovernmental Consultation on the Water and Energy Nexus in the ESCWA Region.

Recommendation (c)

Continue to participate in regional and international coordination mechanisms such as UN-Water and make the necessary preparations for the regional coordination mechanism and its related working groups in order to enhance the coordination of the programmes and activities of the water resources sector in the region.

Measures taken

MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

14. To support coordination, coherence and cooperation among United Nations agencies working in the water sector, the fifteenth UN-Water Senior Programme Managers Meeting was held on the sidelines of the World Water Week (Stockholm, 23-25 August 2011). During the meeting, which was co-chaired by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and ESCWA, the updated budget for the Task Force on Regional-level Coordination was approved. The budget was prepared based on the outcomes of the consultation involving United Nations regional commissions and UN-Water programme experts (Bonn, Germany, 21 February 2011). In addition, ESCWA contributed to a chapter and associated inputs on the Arab region and Western Asia within the fourth edition of the World Water Development Report, led by the World Water Assessment Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

15. The sixteenth meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) for the Arab region, held in Beirut on 25 and 26 November 2011, focused on sustainable development in the context of regional preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). At the meeting, RCM participants discussed the following: (a) the preparatory and consultative meetings that had been

undertaken with Arab countries; (b) the Arab position on the green economy and green development; (c) the politics of sustainable development in the region; and (d) the role and strategies of the United Nations to meet the needs of member countries in integrating sustainable development into policymaking.

16. The seventeenth meeting of RCM took place on 18 December 2012 in Beirut. A round table on Sustainable Development in the Post-2015 Development Agenda and in follow-up to Rio+20 provided an opportunity for RCM members to discuss how to coordinate support for the implementation of Rio+20 follow-up and the role of sustainable development goals in pursuing focused and coherent sustainable development. In addition, to strengthen coordination among RCM members on priority issues, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) presented progress made in coordinating activities under the Thematic Working Group on Climate Change.

Recommendation (d)

Enhance the work of ESCWA and respond to the needs of the member countries in the field of water resources through participating in the international and regional forums such as the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development; the sixth World Water Forum (Marseille, 2012); the Stockholm World Water Week; the Arab Water Forum; and the meetings of AMWC to raise awareness on water issues in the region.

Measures taken

MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

17. Upon the request of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Yemen, ESCWA contributed to the National Water Conference (Sana'a, 15-17 January 2011) through an active participation in the scientific committee, the review of conference papers, the delivery of a presentation, and other conference activities. The themes covered during the conference included strategies for water resources management in Yemen and related policies and procedures.

18. The project on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), established a Master of Science programme in the field of IWRM conducted by the Cologne University of Applied Sciences and the University of Jordan. A representative of ESCWA served as vice-chair of the sixth meeting of the project's advisory board, (Amman, 22-24 January 2011). The advisory board assists in the implementation of programme activities aiming to build the needed capacity to deal with the challenges of water management in the Arab region. The involvement of ESCWA includes proposing research topics to students, contributing to research supervision, participating in programme assessment and thesis evaluation, and providing researchers the possibility to contribute to water-related studies prepared by ESCWA.

19. To face the challenges of increasing water scarcity, increased demand for water resources and desertification processes related to climate change, ESCWA attended a seminar on the "Sustainable Use of Non-Conventional Water Resources", organized by the Sustainable Water Integrated Management Programme (Athens, 16 September 2011). The meeting contributed to the dissemination and effective implementation of sustainable water management policies and practices in the Mediterranean region.

20. In addition, ESCWA participated in the second Arab Water Forum, which was organized by the Arab Water Council (Cairo, 20-23 November 2011). During the forum, ESCWA did the following: (a) served on a panel on climate change convened by the head of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and delivered a presentation on the integrated assessment methodology of RICCAR; and (b) co-organized a session on water supply and sanitation and MDGs with CEDARE, and presented the history, regional context and justification for the MDG+ Initiative. Furthermore, ESCWA contributed to the review of the climate change and MDG session reports, which were incorporated into the proceedings of the forum.

21. At the request of the secretariat of AMWC, ESCWA participated in the sixth World Water Forum (Marseille, 12-17 March 2012) and supported the Arab countries cross-continental process. ESCWA coordinated and organized a session on “Adoption, in the short term (by 2015) of integrated water policies which secure water for all sectors to achieve a maximum socioeconomic benefit and insure the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals”, which is the second of the five targets of the strategy for water security in the Arab region. The presentation delivered by ESCWA highlighted the process of target coordination and identification, the preparation of the action plan, and the compilation of solutions and commitments connected to the target. In addition, ESCWA presented the chapter of the fourth edition of the World Water Development Report that focuses on the Arab region and Western Asia. Moreover, ESCWA participated in the high-level round-table meeting on adaptation to climate change, at the invitation of the Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation, which co-organized the event.

22. Pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/236, and in collaboration with the League of Arab States and UNEP, ESCWA held the Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) (Cairo, 16-17 October 2011). The meeting supported the coordination of Arab positions regarding the issues on the agenda of Rio+20, and resulted in a draft Arab position paper. Among the recommendations adopted during the meeting were the adherence to the principles of the 1992 Rio Declaration, the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations summits and conferences on sustainable development, and the achievement of sustainable development by enhancing and integrating its economic, social and environmental pillars. Subsequently, ESCWA organized over a dozen regional consultations and national workshops to support Arab preparations for Rio+20. In addition, ESCWA prepared several regional reports including “A Regional Review of the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development” and “A Regional Report on Green Economy in the Arab Region”, issued a quarterly newsletter and published related technical material. The Commission also supported the technical consultation with the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) and its Joint Committee for Environment and Development in the Arab Region in view of supporting the finalization of the Arab positions for Rio+20, including Arab perspectives related to a green economy and institutions for sustainable development.

23. At Rio+20 and the Third Preparatory Committee meeting (Rio de Janeiro, 13-15 June 2012), ESCWA convened three side events. The first event, entitled “Food Security and Safety for Development in a Changing Arab World”, was jointly organized by ESCWA, the League of Arab States and GIZ, and included the presentation of a short video reflecting the perspectives of youth on food security. The second entitled “Advancing Sustainable Development in Post-Conflict Countries” was co-organized with the Governments of Lebanon and Liberia, in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The third event on “Green Growth and Sustainable Development: Regional Perspectives” was organized by ESCWA and the other United Nations Regional Commissions. It was chaired by the Executive Secretary of ESCWA and included a keynote statement by the Prime Minister of Lebanon. Each regional commission focused on a specific topic, with ESCWA highlighting “Youth Employment: Opportunities and Challenges Posed by a Transition to a Green Economy in the Arab Region”.

24. The Commission also participated in World Water Week, which was centred on the theme “Water and Food Security” (Stockholm, 26-30 August 2012). A side event was organized by the ESCWA-BGR Cooperation to pre-release the *Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia*. The Inventory website was also launched at that time (www.waterinventory.org), and it will provide users with an online interface to access chapters, maps and other related content of the Inventory after the official launch in 2013.

25. In support of the global project “Groundwater Governance: A Global Framework for Country Action”, ESCWA took part in the regional consultation which was organized by UNESCO (Amman, 8-10 October 2012). During the meeting, ESCWA delivered an opening statement which highlighted the importance of assessing the impact of climate change on surface and groundwater resources in the Arab region and relevant RICCAR activities. In addition, ESCWA presented a regional overview of managed aquifer recharge and related governance challenges using examples from Arab countries. Moreover, ESCWA-BGR Cooperation

presented ongoing work on the *Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia*. The final results of the project will contribute to a global framework of action consisting of a set of tools and good practice for enhancing groundwater governance, including guidelines for policies, legislation, regulations and customary practices.

Recommendation (e)

Continue to support the technical cooperation programmes and provide advisory services to member countries upon their request, after they have clearly articulated their needs and prepared the terms of reference in coordination with ESCWA. The need to respond and handle requests in a timely manner was stressed.

Measures taken

A. ADVISORY SERVICES PROVIDED BY ESCWA TO MEMBER COUNTRIES IN 2011

26. Advisory services in 2011 rendered to Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen in the areas of natural, environmental, water and land resources, resulted in the implementation of key policy and programme recommendations related to improvement in the integrated and sustainable management of those resources, and in mainstreaming the sustainable development approach into national development plans.

Bahrain

- To support the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning and the Ministry of Works in developing an appropriate national approach to the reuse of treated sewage effluent and managed aquifer recharge, ESCWA reviewed and commented on related planning documents and a first draft of the terms of reference of a consultancy study, and contributed to and supported a national workshop on “treated sewage effluent and its utilization in the Kingdom of Bahrain”.
- To assist the Electricity and Water Authority, ESCWA reviewed a draft of the terms of reference for consultancy services related to non-revenue water in Bahrain.

Egypt

- Upon the request of the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs and Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, a mission was carried out to assess and analyse the draft national adaptation strategy and to investigate options for ESCWA to assist in the implementation of the strategy. Support was also provided for the development of the work plan for the capacity-building programme with priority given to training workshops on skills for the negotiation of global climate issues.
- Another mission was undertaken to support the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation in investigating the means of integrating climate change adaptation into the water resources sector. Consultation was provided on the key issues related to the development of adaptation strategies such as climate change scenarios, models, databases, etc. Moreover, support was provided to develop the knowledge mapping of existing capacity on climate change and to explore linkages and the means of cooperation with related sectors.

Jordan

A mission was undertaken to participate in the national training workshop organized by the Jordan Chamber of Industry on “The Role of Productivity Improvement in Enhancing Competitiveness of

Manufacturing Firms in Jordan”. At the workshop, ESCWA delivered a series of presentations, namely: (i) Green economy and the role of the private sector; (ii) Environmental goods and services; (iii) Eco-labelling; (iv) Environmental standards and competitiveness; (v) Water-saving technologies; (vi) Technologies for sustainable land management; and (vii) Improving the energy efficiency of the industrial sector.

Lebanon

As part of the ongoing technical assistance to the Ministry of Energy and Water, ESCWA participated in and contributed to three meetings of the Water Sector Coordination Group and commented on the National Water Sector Strategy.

Oman

- Upon the request of the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources, ESCWA contributed a presentation on “Water Scarcity, Climate Change in the Middle East: Challenges to Water Management” to the international workshop “Hydrology: Nature & Engineering” held at the Sultan Qaboos University in connection to the World Water Day celebration in Oman. The Commission also contributed to the international conference on “Drought Management Strategies in Arid and Semi-Arid Regions”.
- Support was provided to the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources in developing a draft outline for the assessment and reestimation of the overall national water budget with a focus on the total deficit estimate for Oman. The intervention of ESCWA resulted in the launch of a comprehensive consultancy study.
- For the Public Authority for Electricity and Water, ESCWA provided support through a desk study and review of appropriate guideline values for boron in drinking water, which contributed to the revision of national water quality guidelines. Furthermore, ESCWA presented the outcome in a meeting between stakeholders in Oman and at a regional water safety plan conference for the MENA region. In addition, ESCWA supported the Public Authority for Electricity and Water with an assessment of laboratory quality assurances processes.

Palestine

Support was provided to the Palestinian Water Authority to review the status of data and information management in the water sector, contributing to the development of an action plan for an integrated management of geo-spatial water-related information and database for Palestine. An intragovernmental workshop on water management information systems and geographic information system applications resulted in a call to establish the current technical coordination body with regular meetings between the respective Government institutions led by the Palestinian Water Authority.

Saudi Arabia

In cooperation with UNEP/Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA) and the Presidency of Meteorology and Environment, ESCWA organised a “National Workshop on Strengthening Integration of Sustainable Development into National Development Planning for Saudi Arabia” at the Ministry of Economy and Planning. The workshop also addressed the water and sanitation sector.

The Sudan

The Commission is providing long-term support to the Water Harvesting Unit at the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources, now the Ministry of Water Resources and Electricity, in developing a

national approach to water harvesting assessments for future investments in local water infrastructure. Moreover, ESCWA provided a final review of the activities undertaken by the Water Harvesting Unit and recommended that they continue to support regional and State-level water harvesting efforts.

Syrian Arab Republic

The Commission provided comments to the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs on “The National Strategy Framework for Sustainable Development in the Syrian Arab Republic”. The comments also addressed water resources, water supply and sanitation.

Yemen

In Yemen, ESCWA supported the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation in the implementation of a National Conference for Management and Development of Water Resources. That included a review of the conference papers, participation in the identification of the conference concept, objectives and themes, and participation in the preparation of the various conference documents.

B. ADVISORY SERVICES PROVIDED BY ESCWA TO MEMBER COUNTRIES IN 2012

27. In 2012, advisory services to Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates in the areas of natural, environmental, water and land resources resulted in the implementation of key policy and programme recommendations related to improvement in the integrated and sustainable management of those resources, and in mainstreaming the sustainable development approach in national development plans.

Bahrain

- Support was provided to the Ministry of Works for the finalization of the terms of reference for a consultancy on the reuse of treated sewage effluent in managed aquifer recharge.
- To support the Electricity and Water Authority, ESCWA reviewed the national water conservation and demand management activities.

Iraq

Upon the request of the Ministry of Environment, ESCWA provided support and contributions to a national consensus-building and awareness workshop for the Iraq Drought Risk Management Project. The contributions addressed water management challenges under drought conditions and an overview of drought management initiatives in the region, among other things.

Kuwait

Upon the request of the Environment Public Authority, ESCWA contributed to the preparation and implementation of a workshop on “Environmental Indicators and Environmental Performance Index” which also addressed water-related indicators. At the workshop, ESCWA presented officials from the Environment Public Authority and other ministries with the zero-draft outcome document of Rio+20 and the position of the various political groups and countries on the document. In addition, ESCWA assisted in the development of a matrix of implementation of the national environmental strategy with set targets and indicators.

Lebanon

- At the request of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, ESCWA supported the technical review of the Economic and Social Reform Action Plan in March 2012. The comments of ESCWA addressed water resources, water supply and sanitation related issues.
- Upon the request of the Speaker of the Parliament in December 2012 and in coordination with the national counterparts, ESCWA provided technical assistance during the preparation of an interministerial action plan for the Litani River, which was presented during a ministerial-level round table that ESCWA attended in January 2013.
- As part of the ongoing assistance to the Ministry of Energy and Water, ESCWA participated in and contributed to four meetings of the Water Sector Coordination Group.
- Upon the request of the American University of Beirut, ESCWA reviewed a research proposal related to “An Integrated Solution to the Solid Waste, Quarry Rehabilitation and Excavation and Construction Debris Problem in Lebanon”.
- Upon the request of the American University of Technology, ESCWA contributed to the water seminar lecture series with a presentation entitled “Challenges to Water Resources Management in the Middle East”.

Oman

Upon the request of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs, a mission was undertaken to provide advisory services in relation to Arab regional preparations for Rio+20 and to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to provide support on the development of small and medium enterprises, notably in the development of green production sectors.

Palestine

Upon the request of the Palestinian Water Authority, ESCWA supported the setting-up of the Palestinian Water Information Center with the aim of contributing to enhanced internal coordination of water data and information management within the water authority and between different Palestinian stakeholders.

Qatar

The Ministry of Environment submitted several requests for assistance with national preparations for Rio+20 and the eighteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP18) (Doha, 26 November-7 December 2012). In response to those requests, ESCWA contributed to the “National Workshop in preparation for Rio+20” to support the preparation of national positions and develop a road map for mainstreaming sustainable development in national development strategies. In addition, ESCWA coordinated with the Government of Qatar to organize the *Hikma Hours* event at COP18, which highlighted regional initiatives focused on climate change with respect to the water, health, environment and economic sectors.

Saudi Arabia

- Upon the request of the Ministry of Water and Electricity, ESCWA provided assistance towards the future implementation of a System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water (SEEAW) in Saudi Arabia, which included contributions to a draft terms of reference for a consultancy and a draft agenda for a national training workshop on SEEAW.

- Technical assistance was provided to the Ministry of Economy and Planning and ESCWA drafted a manual/guidance note for the development and application of indicators for the environmental pillar of sustainable development, in the example sectors of environment and water, entitled “Water and Environment Indicators for Sustainable Development in National Development Planning, Saudi Arabia”. In addition, ESCWA prepared first drafts of policy papers for the environment and water sectors upon the request of the Ministry of Economy and Planning. The draft policy papers were part of a multidisciplinary contribution from ESCWA to the preparation of the Tenth Development Plan for Saudi Arabia. The papers are entitled: “The Future We Want - Water and Sanitation in Saudi Arabia” and “The Future We Want - Environmental Management in Saudi Arabia”.

The Sudan

In connection with a longer-term partnership to support to the Water Harvesting Unit at the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources, now the Ministry of Water Resources and Electricity, ESCWA is developing a national approach to water harvesting assessments for future investments in local water infrastructure. Moreover, ESCWA supported a visit of staff from the Ministry of Water Resources in the Sudan to the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources in Oman. During the visit, the Sudanese colleagues further developed their knowledge of the water harvesting techniques and groundwater recharge dams used in Oman.

Syrian Arab Republic

Upon the request of the Ministry of Irrigation, ESCWA supported an internal revision of the organizational structure and name of the Ministry through the development of a questionnaire for senior staff. Later in 2012, the ministry was renamed as Ministry of Water Resources.

United Arab Emirates

Upon the request of the Ministry of Environment and Water, ESCWA prepared a short review of laws and legislation in ESCWA member countries concerning water and energy conservation.

Recommendation (f)

Send a request to the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development to extend the joint regional cooperation project between ESCWA and BGR in order to support the work programme of ESCWA for the next biennium.

Measures taken

28. It was expected that the ESCWA-BGR Cooperation project would end on 31 March 2012. Based on the requests of the Committee, ESCWA and BGR, the project phase was extended twice by BMZ. An extension was granted until 30 September 2012 (based on a 22 November 2011 request) and a second extension was granted until 30 June 2013, based on a second request submitted by BGR on 5 June 2012.

Recommendation (g)

Follow up the proposal of the Committee to convene its session annually to activate its role in implementing its programme of work and study the possibility to convene a yearly preparatory meeting until the proposal is endorsed.

Measures taken

29. During the fifth meeting of the ESCWA Technical Committee held in Beirut on 6-7 April 2011, members of the Committee did not agree on the recommendation of the Committee on Water Resources to convene sessions annually, due to the logistical and financial burdens that it would entail on both member countries and the ESCWA secretariat.

Recommendation (h)

Provide the members of the Committee with a semi-annual electronic report on the progress achieved in the implementation of the planned activities of the Water Resources Section.

Measures taken

30. A semi-annual progress report was prepared by the ESCWA secretariat and was sent electronically to Committee members. It covered the achievements of the Water Resources Section from April to September 2011.

31. Committee members, or their delegated representatives, who participated in the Intergovernmental Consultative Meeting on the Water and Energy Nexus in the ESCWA Region, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 June 2012, received a progress report on ESCWA activities undertaken in the field of water resources from October 2011 to June 2012.

Recommendation (i)

Continue to support the preparation of the draft legal framework on shared water resources in the Arab region in conformity with the resolutions of AMWC and within the regional cooperation project between ESCWA and BGR.

Measures taken

32. All measures taken to implement that recommendation, including the meetings, workshops and consultations held to support the preparation of the draft legal framework on shared water resources are detailed in the report E/ESCWA/SDPD/2013/IG.1/5(Part I), submitted to the Committee on Water Resources at its tenth session under agenda item 6(a).

Recommendation (j)

Send formal requests to the members of the Committee to nominate national focal points to follow up the preparation of an inventory of shared water resources in the ESCWA region. It is very important that the members of the Committee respond to the requests within two weeks of the date of receipt.

Measures taken

33. A letter was sent by Director of the Sustainable Development and Productivity Division, to the members of the Committee on Water Resources on 5 April 2011, requesting the nomination of national focal points to follow up on the preparation of the ESCWA-BGR *Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia*. In addition, the Secretary of the Commission provided members of the ESCWA Technical Committee with a copy of the letter requesting the nomination of focal points and the list of Committee on Water Resources members at its fifth meeting in 2011.

34. Fourteen ESCWA member countries responded to the invitation and assigned national focal points to support the finalization of the Inventory. Some of the nominated focal points were standing members of the Committee on Water Resources. Libya, Morocco and Tunisia were not approached because they were not ESCWA member countries when the activity began and do not have water resources that are shared with Western Asia.

35. National focal points were invited to review and contribute information and data gathered for the Inventory and were consulted on basin chapters. They were subsequently requested to review the chapters that specifically relate to their country. The completed Inventory provides information on shared surface and groundwater resources in Western Asia, including sub-basins, with emphasis on hydrology, hydrogeology, water resources development and use, in addition to the status of cooperation and management.

Recommendation (k)

Take into account the close relationship between the integrated management of shared water resources and the issues of Arab food security, green energy and green economy when developing future programmes for ESCWA; and pay special attention to the integrated management of shared water resources in view of its importance to Arab water security.

Measures taken

A. MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

36. To support the launching of the Arab regional initiative on “Green Jobs”, ESCWA cooperated with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNDP to organize a workshop on “Going green and promoting new jobs and skills for Arab youth” (Beirut, 28-29 July 2011). Discussions revolved around the joint assessments undertaken by ILO and UNDP in four sectors of the Lebanese economy, namely energy, construction, water and agriculture, and waste management. The workshop, which is the first of its kind in Lebanon, revealed the employment potential of the green economy, highlighted the nexus of climate change and decent work, and discussed policies to stimulate youth employment in green sectors of the Lebanese economy.

37. A press conference was held in Beirut at the United Nations House on 2 June 2011, on the occasion of the World Environment Day, to launch a UNEP report entitled “Forests in a Green Economy: A Synthesis”. The findings of the report were summarized in a presentation by ESCWA, and two short documentaries on forests, produced by UNEP, were screened. The documentaries spurred discussions on a range of relevant issues. Representatives of media and active environmental non-governmental organizations in Lebanon attended the event.

38. As part of its mandate to lead regional preparations for Rio+20, ESCWA organized a series of national and regional workshops and seminars targeting different stakeholders. That included the “Expert Group Meeting on Economic Policies Supporting the Transition to a Green Economy in the Arab Region”, (Beirut, 20-21 July 2011). The meeting covered several issues that were negotiated at Rio+20 and pathways for the transition to a green economy, notably economic and environmental instruments. Participants discussed measures for developing competitive economic activities in global green markets such as renewable energies, desalination, water efficiency, and so on.

39. The purpose of the International UN-Water Conference on “Water in the Green Economy in Practice: Towards Rio+20” (Zaragoza, Spain, 3-5 October 2011) was to maximize the exchange of experiences and to highlight the shift towards green economy. During the conference, ESCWA delivered a presentation on water and the green economy in the Arab region and moderated a panel discussion on access to water and sanitation with a green economy context. The panellists showcased two successful water projects: “The reform of the urban water supply and sanitation sector in Yemen” and “The role of ACWUA in promoting the exchange of experiences and expertise”. The session also reviewed progress towards the targets of MDGs related to water supply and sanitation, which could promote the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication in the ESCWA region.

40. Within the context of fostering regional discussion on food security challenges facing the region, ESCWA and the International Food Policy Research Institute jointly organized an international conference entitled “Food Secure Arab World: A Road Map for Policy and Research” (Beirut, 6-7 February 2012). The

conference concluded with recommendations focused on transitions in the region, fostering job-creating growth, improving trade and market integration, supporting innovative solutions for agriculture and water constraints, leveraging health, nutrition and education for food security, implementing strategies and policies effectively, and establishing smart strategic partnerships.

41. At the Bahrain International Green Tech Expo and Forum 2012, organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (Manama, 13-15 March 2012), ESCWA delivered a presentation on “Green Economy in the ESCWA Region: Examples of Opportunities”. The presentation highlighted how green economy can promote the sustainable development of the ESCWA region, and provided examples of opportunities in terms of technology and policy, particularly in the water, energy, and agricultural sectors. It also addressed potentials of considering water footprint in designing trade structure and policies.

42. On 22 March 2012, ESCWA commemorated World Water Day in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Information Centre with an event that focused on water and food security. During the event, ESCWA filmed a number of video messages delivered by university students to reflect their understanding of food security concepts. The messages were compiled into a short documentary that was presented during a side event on food security co-organized by ESCWA, the League of Arab States and GIZ at Rio+20.

43. The Water and Energy Network for Development at Electricité de France organized a regional seminar on “Water and Energy - a couple under stress” (Abu Dhabi, 27-28 March 2011). At the seminar, ESCWA delivered a presentation on “Production and consumption of water and energy in the MENA region” and contributed to a panel discussion. The meeting targeted local authorities, public institutions, private companies, academics and journalists.

44. Upon the invitation of the Water Science and Technology Association and the General Electricity and Water Corporation of Qatar, ESCWA participated in the tenth Gulf Water Conference on the water-energy-food nexus (Doha, 22-24 April 2012). During the meeting ESCWA contributed two technical presentations on strengthening the policy dialogue on sustainable development priority issues, particularly on regulatory aspects of managed aquifer recharge and prospects and challenges of promoting links between water and energy. Experts discussed sustainable planning and management of water and energy resources, water security and food sustainability, the management of groundwater and surface water resources, the management of the municipal water sector, and desalination technologies.

45. The Intergovernmental Consultative Meeting on the Water and Energy Nexus in the ESCWA Region (Beirut, 27-28 June 2012) was held to enhance institutional and technical mechanisms and to better organize coordination and policy harmonization efforts between the ESCWA Committee on Water Resources and ESCWA Committee on Energy. Participants agreed on a number of recommendations and priority issues.

B. STUDIES AND TECHNICAL MATERIALS

46. “Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication: Principles, Opportunities and Challenges in the Arab Region” (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2011/3) suggested a set of priorities and actions aimed to reach a coherent position among Arab countries in dealing with green economy. It included a set of recommendations suggesting an efficient transition towards a green economy in accordance with the socioeconomic characteristics of individual countries and through the adoption of appropriate policies in the Arab region.

47. A brochure for World Water Day entitled “Water and Food Security” (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2012/ Technical Paper.1) focused attention on the importance of the sustainable management of freshwater resources. The brochure provided key messages on select issues such as the importance of water for food security, the development of non-conventional water resources, the need to emphasize the nexus of land, water and food security, and the region’s dependency on food imports. It concluded with an overview of the options available for food security in the region.

48. In commemoration of the World Environment Day 2012, ESCWA prepared a brochure entitled “Green Economy: Does it include you?” (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2012/Technical Paper.3) that highlighted the need for a paradigm shift towards a more sustainable world. The brochure also included information about the Arab regional preparation for Rio+20. Since the green economy was among the top issues deliberated by policymakers at Rio+20, the brochure was also distributed at that conference.

Recommendation (l)

Provide national and regional policymakers with the results 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), within the appropriate time frame and geographical context, in order to prepare and formulate appropriate policies at the national and regional levels.

Measures taken

49. All measures taken to implement that recommendation, including meetings, consultations and workshops held; projects launched; and studies and technical materials published within RICCAR, are detailed in the report E/ESCWA/SDPD/2013/IG.1/4 presented to the Committee on Water Resources at its tenth session under agenda item (5).

Recommendation (m)

Include issues related to the vulnerability of the marine environment resources and extreme weather events in the regional initiative.

Measures taken

50. In response to the recommendation of the Committee, ESCWA approached the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) with a proposal to expand the scope of the SIDA-funded climate change project to include the analysis of extreme weather events as a core component of the integrated assessment. The proposal included activities that aimed to pursue regional climate modelling at a smaller scale of analysis, build further capacity in climate information and analysis and conduct case studies of selected basins. The proposal invited the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) to join as a project partner to support the preparation of disaster loss databases in selected Arab countries to increase understanding about vulnerability to extreme weather events. SIDA accepted the proposal and ESCWA and SIDA signed the addendum to the project agreement in December 2011.

Recommendation (n)

Inform the donors funding regional climate change projects and adaptation strategies in the region of the launching 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); and welcome the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency to the initiative.

Measures taken

51. In view of supporting complementary, coordinated and unified regional efforts, ESCWA informed donors and funding institutions in the region of the RICCAR initiative. The Commission also informed Arab Governments and stakeholders, including through the RCM Thematic Working Group on Climate Change. During its meeting on 6 July 2012, the working group agreed to propose a joint Arab side event at COP18 to showcase RICCAR, the UNDP Arab Resilience Initiative and WHO Regional Initiative on Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Planning to Protect Health from Climate Change. The presentation entitled “Climate Change Vulnerability and Impact Assessment: Initiatives for Adaptation in the Arab Region” was

accepted as part of the *Hikma Hours* event and was co-chaired by ESCWA and the League of Arab States. Over a hundred representatives from Governments and national, regional and global stakeholder groups attended the presentation. Since then, WHO requested and was selected to serve on the RICCAR Vulnerability Assessment Working Group.

52. During a study tour organized by GIZ for League of Arab States, ACSAD and ESCWA counterparts in October 2012, ESCWA had the opportunity to present RICCAR to other institutions engaged in climate change assessments, negotiations and adaptation in Arab countries. There may be new opportunities for collaboration with those institutions.

53. Efforts to coordinate Arab regional programmes and plans were also pursued through intergovernmental mechanisms supported by the League of Arab States. Under the auspices of CAMRE, ESCWA coordinated with UNISDR and partners on the preparation of an action plan to support the programme of action of the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020, which was approved in December 2010. That included participating in an expert group meeting in Cairo, 15-16 November 2011, to discuss capacity-building needs and technical support that agencies and donors could provide to countries to mobilize action on disaster risk reduction. Several RICCAR-related activities were incorporated into the action plan that UNISDR is coordinating. ESCWA also collaborated with partners to introduce components of RICCAR into the Arab Framework Action Plan on Climate Change, which was adopted by CAMRE in December 2012.

54. Under the auspices of AMWC, ESCWA is supporting the preparation of the action plan of the Strategy for Water Security in the Arab Region to Meet the Challenges and Future Needs for Sustainable Development 2010-2030, which was approved by the council in 2011. ESCWA and GIZ are supporting the drafting of the climate change chapter which includes most of the activities planned for implementation under RICCAR and will help to encourage the coordination of efforts among the countries and institutions supporting AMWC.

55. ESCWA also delivered presentations about RICCAR to donor organizations at a training workshop on Climate Change and Sustainable Land-Water Management that was organized by the Arab Water Academy in coordination with the World Bank Institute (Abu-Dhabi, 2-6 October 2011). In addition, ESCWA delivered a presentation on "Conceptual Framework for Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment on Water Resources and Agriculture in the Arab Region". The participants expressed interest in attending expert group meetings and workshops on RICCAR.

Recommendation (o)

Continue to monitor and document the progress achieved in implementing the MDGs related to water supply and sanitation; and implement the regional initiative for the development of a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the MDGs related to water and sanitation (MDG+) in the Arab region. This initiative will be implemented in response to the decisions of AMWC and the necessary resources will be mobilized for building capacity, collecting data and developing indicators and its measurement techniques.

Measures taken

56. All measures taken to implement that recommendation, including the project agreement with SIDA to establish the regional mechanism to monitor the implementation of the MDGs related to water and sanitation, the designation by countries of focal points who will lead the national monitoring teams, and the training manual prepared by ESCWA to outline the methodology for the collection of information are detailed in the report E/ESCWA/SDPD/2013/IG.1/3, presented to the Committee on Water Resources at its tenth session under agenda item (4).
