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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Committee on Water Resources  
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Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM  
2014-2015 IN THE FIELD OF WATER RESOURCES**

**Summary**

The proposed programme of work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the biennium 2014-2015 in the field of water resources presents a set of activities and outputs related to the implementation of the expected accomplishments envisaged under subprogramme 1 on integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development, of the strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015. While subprogramme 1 comprises the work of ESCWA in the fields of energy, water resources and productive sectors, and is implemented by the Sustainable Development and Productivity Division (SDPD) at ESCWA, this document contains the proposed activities in the field of water resources only, which are implemented by the Water Resources Section of SDPD.

The Committee on Water Resources is invited to review the activities listed in the proposed programme of work, and discuss the extent to which they meet the priorities of ESCWA member countries and their relevance to the expected accomplishments in the field of water resources under subprogramme 1. The Committee is also invited to discuss ways to concretely measure the indicators of achievement in order to accurately monitor progress achieved in member countries as a result of implementing the proposed outputs.

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## Introduction

1. The activities comprised in the proposed programme of work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the biennium 2014-2015 in the field of water resources were formulated on the basis of subprogramme 1 on integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development, of the strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015, which was adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-seventh session (Beirut, 7-10 May 2012).
2. The Sustainable Development and Productivity Division (SDPD) at ESCWA is responsible for the implementation of subprogramme 1 through its three sections (Energy, Water Resources and Productive Sectors). During the biennium 2014-2015, SDPD will maintain focus on promoting regional and subregional cooperation on sustainable development in the fields of energy, water resources and productive sectors, and assisting member countries in the harmonization of relevant policies and standards. This document presents the proposed outputs to be implemented by the Water Resources Section.
3. In preparing those outputs, the secretariat has given due consideration to the following:
  - (a) Major challenges facing the Arab region, including issues that have emerged during the implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011 and in 2012;
  - (b) Progress achieved by member countries in the implementation of global policy on sustainable development, including the outcome document entitled "The future we want", which was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) held in June 2012, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation which was adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2002, Agenda 21 which was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, and resolutions of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), in particular with regard to the water-energy-food nexus;
  - (c) The Arab Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change, which was adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment at its nineteenth session (Cairo, 5-6 December 2007), and in which the ministers affirmed the determination of their Governments to adopt national and regional action plans on climate change issues, with a view to assessing possible impacts and developing mitigation and adaptation programmes, and to include climate change policies in all sectors within national and regional policies for sustainable development;
  - (d) General Assembly resolution 63/281 of 3 June 2009 on "Climate change and its possible security implications", and ESCWA resolution 281 (XXV) on "Addressing climate change issues in the Arab region" adopted at its twenty-fifth session (Sana'a, 26-29 May 2008), in which member country representatives requested the secretariat to prepare an assessment of the vulnerability to climate change of economic and social development in the region, with particular emphasis on fresh water resources.
4. Driven by those global and regional mandates, ESCWA is exerting extensive efforts to develop an assessment of the impacts of climate change on water resources and socioeconomic vulnerability in the Arab region, and build capacities of member countries on relevant climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. Therefore, additional activities on climate change that are multidisciplinary in nature are expected to be undertaken under subprogramme 1. Resources to support field projects related to the water sector during the bienniums 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 have been secured from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the United Nations Development Account (DA).

## I. ACTION REQUIRED OF THE COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES

5. The Committee on Water Resources is invited to review the proposed outputs and provide its guidance to the secretariat based on the following two criteria: (a) the extent to which the proposed outputs respond to the needs of intended beneficiaries, namely ministries and authorities in the Arab region in charge of water resources issues; and (b) the extent to which those outputs contribute to the realization of the expected accomplishments of subprogramme 1, while taking into account also the outcome of the deliberations that take place at the present session.

## II. SUBPROGRAMME 1: INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### A. OBJECTIVE OF SUBPROGRAMME 1 FOR THE BIENNIUM 2014-2015

6. The objective of subprogramme 1 is to achieve sustainable development in the region through integrated natural resource management. The responsibility for implementing subprogramme 1 lies with the Sustainable Development and Productivity Division at ESCWA.

### B. EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(a) Strengthened capacity of member countries to develop and increase inclusive and equitable socioeconomic opportunities by increasing the productivity of small and medium-sized enterprises for employment creation and economic diversification	(a) (i) Increased number of measures formulated by line ministries, chambers of commerce and other actors on small and medium-sized enterprises to increase their productivity  (ii) Increased number of institutions involved in creating opportunities for generating employment through small and medium-sized enterprises
(b) Enhanced capacity of member countries to develop and implement national, subregional and regional policies, strategies and action plans for the sustainable management of water, energy and land	(b) (i) Increased number of policies, plans and strategies adopted by relevant ministries in member countries addressing water, energy and land needs  (ii) Increased number of interventions to improve access to and efficiency of water and energy services
(c) Enhanced food, water and energy security of the Arab region to sustain long-term development and preserve the achievements in poverty alleviation and human development by promoting regional cooperation on shared water resources, energy networks and land management	(c) Increased number of intergovernmental recommendations adopted on regional cooperative initiatives related to water, energy and food security

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(d) Enhanced resilience and crisis management capacity of member countries to absorb and respond to the impact of crises, including the development of subregional and regional mechanisms for a coordinated response to climate change and natural crises	(d) Increased number of recommendations adopted by member countries that aim to coordinate responses to climate change and natural crises

### C. STRATEGY

19.32 The interrelated and complex challenges facing the region and current social and political tensions have wide-ranging consequences that require concerted efforts to strengthen the inter-linkages between the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development and to galvanize action at the national and regional levels. The regional challenges include increasing population pressure and the related rise in demand for water and energy services; rising unemployment, particularly among young people; unsustainable production and consumption patterns; the need to ensure water, energy and food security; the disparity between urban and rural development; low agricultural productivity; traffic congestion and unsustainable transport systems; and climate change and its impact on water resources, desertification and land management.

19.33 To enhance the impact of the work of ESCWA and improve its services to the countries of the region, the work under subprogramme 1 will focus on providing support to those countries to address the above-mentioned challenges and to move towards a more sustainable development pathway.

19.34 The subprogramme will undertake or continue to pursue the following actions:

(a) Advocating and raising awareness of global commitments, particularly the Millennium Development Goals and the outcomes of major United Nations conferences on sustainable development, especially the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and to monitor and support follow-up actions;

(b) Serving as a forum for promoting policy dialogue on sustainable development issues and priorities for forging regional positions and perspectives based on the exchange of information, lessons learned and best practice;

(c) Supporting member countries in their efforts to improve the efficient use of renewable and non-renewable water, energy and land resources, including the application of appropriate environment-friendly technologies, and to encourage the integrated management of water, energy and land to achieve sustainable development;

(d) Facilitating regional cooperation and coordination on water, energy and land as the means to enhance food, water and energy security;

(e) Contributing to national and regional capacity-building, especially on water, energy (including renewable energy) and agricultural issues;

(f) Supporting the development of national or regional mechanisms for the integration of the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development;

(g) Supporting the development of national or regional mechanisms to address climate change impacts;

(h) Supporting the efforts of member countries to strengthen small and medium-sized enterprises for job creation and economic diversification.

19.35 This will be achieved by servicing intergovernmental bodies; conducting high-quality research and analytical work; organizing intergovernmental and expert meetings; providing advisory services; implementing field projects, including extrabudgetary and DA projects; building capacity through workshops and other technical assistance activities; and issuing technical material to raise awareness of key sustainable development issues and challenges targeted for global and regional action in 2014 and 2015.

19.36 The work under the subprogramme will strive to maximize synergies through collaboration with United Nations agencies and organizations, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and through participation in the United Nations inter-agency coordination mechanisms on water resources and energy (UN-Water and UN-Energy), and the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM). It will continue to cooperate with the League of Arab States and its associated bodies, particularly the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), the Arab Ministerial Council for Water (AMCW) and the Arab Ministerial Council for Electricity, in addition to other regional mechanisms for coordination on sustainable development.

#### D. EXTERNAL FACTORS

Subprogramme 1 will achieve its expected accomplishments provided that: (a) member countries remain committed to giving due priority to sustainable development issues and adopt appropriate measures; (b) political stability is improved and member countries are willing to cooperate on sustainable development issues; and (c) there are no significant shortfall in extrabudgetary resources.

#### E. OUTPUTS

The Sustainable Development and Productivity Division which comprises three sections (Energy, Water Resources and Productive Sectors) is responsible for the implementation of expected accomplishments under subprogramme 1. This document, however, presents only the activities falling under the responsibility of the Water Resources Section. During the biennium 2014-2015, the following outputs connected to each accomplishment are expected to be implemented by the Water Resources Section:

(a) *Servicing intergovernmental and expert bodies*

(i) *Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (twenty-eighth session)*

Parliamentary documentation: Report of the Committee on Water Resources on its tenth session (2014, expected accomplishment (c)).

(ii) *Committee on Water Resources*

a. Servicing the meeting of the eleventh session of the Committee on Water Resources (2015, expected accomplishment (c));

b. Parliamentary documentation:

- i. Progress in implementing the MDG+ Initiative: looking beyond 2015 (2015, expected accomplishment (c));
  - ii. Progress in assessing the impact of climate change on water resources and socioeconomic vulnerability in the Arab region (2015, expected accomplishment (c)).
- (iii) *Ad hoc expert group meetings*
  - a. Enhancing sustainable management of water, energy, and land (2015, expected accomplishment (b));
  - b. Assessing cooperation on shared water resources in the Arab region (2014, expected accomplishment (c));
  - c. Good practice in food, water and energy security (2015, expected accomplishment (c));
  - d. Moving towards climate change adaptation in the Arab region (2015, expected accomplishment (d)).
- (iv) *Assistance to intergovernmental bodies and/or United Nations representatives/rapporteurs under their established mandates*
  - a. Support to the high-level political forum replacing the Commission on Sustainable Development (2014 and 2015, expected accomplishment (b));
  - b. Support to the Technical Scientific Advisory Committee of the Arab Ministerial Water Council (2014 and 2015, expected accomplishment (c));
  - c. Support to CAMRE and its joint committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR) (as a member of its secretariat composed of the League of Arab States, ESCWA and UNEP) (2014 and 2015, expected accomplishment (c));
  - d. Support to the Arab Permanent Committee on Meteorology (2014 and 2015, expected accomplishment (d)).
- (b) *Other substantive activities (regular budget)*
  - (i) *Recurrent publication*

ESCWA Water Development Report No. 6: The Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus (2015, expected accomplishment (b)).
  - (ii) *Non-recurrent publication*

Cooperation on Shared Water Resources in the Arab Region (2014, expected accomplishment (c)).
  - (iii) *Technical material*
    - a. Access to water supply and sanitation in the Arab region: beyond 2015 (2015, expected accomplishment (b));

- b. Green technologies for water and energy efficiency (2015, expected accomplishment (c));
- c. Linking climate change adaptation to disaster risk reduction strategies (2015, expected accomplishment (d)).

(iv) *Other printed material*

- a. Brochure on:  
Water supply and sanitation: beyond 2015 (2014, expected accomplishment (b));
- b. Promotional material for:
  - i. The World Environment Day (2014 and 2015, expected accomplishment (b));
  - ii. The World Water Day 2014: Water-Energy Nexus (2014, expected accomplishment (c));
  - iii. The World Water Day 2015: Water and Development (2015, expected accomplishment (b)).

(v) *Contribution to activities of other United Nations agencies*

- a. Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-first and twenty-second sessions (2014 and 2015, expected accomplishment (d));
- b. UN-Water Task Force on Regional-level Coordination (Co-chaired by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and ESCWA) (2014, expected accomplishment (c));
- c. UN-Water inter-agency coordination for the preparation of the World Water Development Report, and joint initiatives pursued through the Thematic Priority Areas on “Water and Climate Change” and “Transboundary Waters” (2015, expected accomplishment (c));
- d. Seventh World Water Forum (Daegu, South Korea) (2015, expected accomplishment (b));
- e. Stockholm World Water Week on the “Water-Energy Nexus” (2014, expected accomplishment (c));
- f. Stockholm World Water Week on “Water and Development” (2015, expected accomplishment (b)).

(c) *Technical cooperation (extrabudgetary)*

*Field projects*

- a. Establishing a regional mechanism for improved monitoring and reporting on access to water supply and sanitation services in the Arab region: the MDG+ Initiative (2014-2015, expected accomplishment (b));



- b. Support to the Arab Integrated Water Resources Management Network (AWARENET) (2014-2015, expected accomplishment (c));
- c. Regional initiative for the assessment of the impact of climate change on water resources and socioeconomic vulnerability in the Arab region (2014-2015, expected accomplishment (d));
- d. Assessment of the impact of climate change on water resources and socioeconomic development in the Arab region (2014-2015, expected accomplishment (d));
- e. Building the capacity of Arab countries for climate change adaptation through Integrated Water Resources Management tools (DA eighth tranche) (2014-2015, expected accomplishment (d));
- f. Adaptation to climate change in the water sector in the Middle East and North Africa region (2014-2015, expected accomplishment (d));
- g. Developing the capacity of ESCWA member countries to address the water-energy nexus for achieving sustainable development goals (DA ninth tranche) (2014-2015, expected accomplishment (d)).

Annex I

**LEGISLATIVE MANDATES**

*General Assembly resolutions*

57/253	World Summit on Sustainable Development
63/217	Natural disasters and vulnerability
63/281	Climate change and its possible security implications
64/197	Agricultural technology for development
64/198	Midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015
64/201	United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010-2020)
64/206	Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy
65/10	Sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth for poverty eradication and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals
65/151	International Year of Sustainable Energy for All
65/152	Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development
65/153	Follow-up to the International Year of Sanitation, 2008
65/154	International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013
65/157	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
65/160	Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa
65/178	Agriculture development and food security
66/104	The law of transboundary aquifers
66/197	Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development
66/219	South-South cooperation
66/288	The future we want
67/11	Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States
67/203	Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
67/204	Implementation of the International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013

67/209 International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

*Economic and Social Council resolutions*

2006/49 Outcome of the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

2009/28 The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration on the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development adopted at the high-level segment of the 2008 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 2008

2012/1 Requests from the Republic of Tunisia, Libya and the Kingdom of Morocco to become members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

*Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions*

269 (XXIV) The role of ESCWA in light of the 2005 Water Summit Outcomes Document and the subsequent change process

281 (XXV) Addressing climate change issues in the Arab region

305 (XXVII) Sustainable development in the region and follow-up and implementation of the decisions of the Rio+20 Conference

Annex II**RESOLUTIONS OF THE ARAB MINISTERIAL WATER COUNCIL  
CONCERNING THE WORK OF ESCWA**

The following table presents the paragraphs relevant to the work of ESCWA in the field of water resources as requested in resolutions adopted by the Arab Ministerial Water Council of the League of Arab States.

Res 2 – Regular session 1 30 June 2009	“Invites ESCWA to set up a mechanism for cooperation and coordination with the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA), the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), the Arab Water Council (AWC), and the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED) to prepare an in-depth study on progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals related to water supply and sanitation, taking into consideration the quality of service provided, and based on harmonized indicators and standards for evaluation and comparison, and report on the study progress to the Council’s Technical Scientific Advisory Committee at its next meeting”.
Res 5 – Regular session 1 30 June 2009	“Assigns the technical secretariat of the AMWC to re-disseminate the study that has been prepared by the economic sector of the secretariat of the League of Arab States and ESCWA on the legal and legislative aspects of protecting the Arab interests in water resources shared with non-Arab States”.
Res 11 – Regular session 1 30 June 2009	“Declares the third of March of every year the Arab Water Day”.
Res 18 – Regular session 2 2 July 2010	“Calls upon ESCWA, and in coordination with ACWUA, CEDARE, the World Health Organizations (WHO), AWC and RAED, to prepare a unified template of indicators (basic and additional) and standards for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals related to water supply and sanitation, and to forward it to the Council’s Technical Scientific Advisory Committee no later than 30 October 2010”.
Res 20 – Regular session 2 2 July 2010	“Invites the Center of Water Studies and Arab Water Security and ESCWA, in coordination with the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) and Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), to develop a legal framework for shared water resources within the Arab region to be discussed at the fourth meeting of the Council’s Technical Scientific Advisory Committee”.
Res 35 – Regular Session 3 15 June 2011	“Invites the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA), Centre for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), Arab Water Council (AWC) and Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), to contact regional and international funding agencies in order to secure funding for the implementation of activities related to the provision of an information system and the building capacity of national focal points and other activities related to the preparation of the first report on the progress made towards implementing the MDG on water supply and sanitation in the Arab region and that is based on the indicators and standards mentioned in the adopted unified template”.

<p>Res 37 – Regular session 3 15 June 2011 Item 4</p>	<p>“Commissions the Technical Secretariat of the Arab Ministerial Water Council to circulate the draft legal framework on shared groundwater in the Arab region to the water relevant agencies in the Arab countries and to specialized Arab organizations to solicit their views and comments on it and send their comments to the Center for Water Studies and Arab Water Security by 30 October 2011”.</p>
<p>Res 37 – Regular session 3 15 June 2011 Item 5</p>	<p>“Commissions the Center for Water Studies and Arab Water Security and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to organize a consultation meeting comprising the Arab countries to discuss the legal framework on shared groundwater in the Arab region”.</p>
<p>Res 53 – Regular session 4 29 May 2012</p>	<p>“Invites the Arab Committee established by the Executive Bureau of the Council, which includes the Technical Secretariat of the Arab Ministerial Water Council, Iraq, ESCWA, the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), the Arab Center for Water Studies and Water Security, the Arab Water Council, the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), the United Nations Environment Programme/Regional Office for Western Asia (UNEP/ROWA) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)) to draft the executive programme to follow-up on the implementation of the Arab Strategy for Water Security in the Arab Region to Meet the Challenges and Future Needs for Sustainable Development taking into consideration the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) projects approved by the Council”.</p>
<p>Res 54 – Regular Session 4 29 May 2012</p>	<p>“Invites the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA), Centre for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), Arab Water Council (AWC) and Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), to contact regional and international funding agencies in order to secure funding for the implementation of activities related to the provision of an information system and the building capacity of national focal points and other activities related to the preparation of the first report on the progress made towards implementing the MDG on water supply and sanitation in the Arab region and that is based on the indicators and standards mentioned in the adopted unified template”.</p>

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