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Activities of the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies**Summary**

The present document informs the Executive Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) of the activities carried out in the past two years by the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies (ACCCP), whose establishment at ESCWA was welcomed by member States in resolution 329 (XXX) of 28 June 2018. It also summarizes the mandates of ACCCP and its scope of work, highlighting how partnerships have been pursued to scale up that work.

The current report was presented by the ESCWA secretariat at the joint meeting of the ESCWA Committee on Energy and Committee on Water Resources, held online on 28 September 2021. Participants in the joint meeting welcomed the progress made by ACCCP, and expressed their views on the national and regional priorities in the coming years in the field of climate change.

This document will be complemented by an updated presentation on the activities that took place during the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 26), held in Glasgow, Scotland, from 31 October to 12 November 2021.

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	1-2	3
<i>Chapter</i>		
I. Water resources management, disaster risk reduction and climate change..	3-14	3
A. Adaptation and co-benefits.....	4-6	5
B. Climate change assessment and linkages to disaster risk reduction.....	7-11	6
C. Climate finance	12-14	7
II. Sustainable energy management and climate change.....	15-19	8
III. The Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies.....	20-33	11
A. Operationalization of the ACCCP.....	20-21	11
B. Building New Partnerships under the ACCCP	22-30	12
C. Advancing work on climate change negotiation and implementation of the Paris Agreement	31-33	15
IV. Future activities.....	34-39	18
V. Way forward	40-41	19

Introduction

1. The present document provides an overview of activities carried out in the past two years by the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies (ACCCP) of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), whose establishment at ESCWA was welcomed by member States in resolution 329 (XXX) of 28 June 2018. It also summarizes the mandates of ACCCP and its scope of work, highlighting how partnerships have been pursued to scale up that work.
2. The Executive Committee is invited to take note of the activities of ACCCP and present views about them.

I. Water resources management, disaster risk reduction and climate change

3. The following table sets out selected technical and advisory missions and meetings since December 2019 to address the cross-cutting issues of water resources management, disaster risk reduction and climate change.

Event	Place and date	Partners	Description
Workshop on capacity-building to access disruptive technologies to improve water resource management under climate change	Beirut, 14-15 January 2020	World Bank	The meeting aimed to identify challenges, opportunities and innovative approaches to using disruptive technologies and climate forecasts to improve water resource management in the Levant region.
Four sessions of the Arab Climate Outlook Forum (ArabCOF)	In person meeting in 2019 and three virtual meetings in 2020 and 2021	League of Arab States (LAS) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO)	Seasonal weather was forecasted for the summer and winter months as well as monitoring of climate patterns, assessment of the current climatic conditions and verification of ArabCOF's previous climate forecasts.
Series of virtual RICCAR workshops to analyse the impact of climate change using geospatial information systems (GIS) tools	Six virtual, 1 July - 12 August 2020		The seminar series brought together Government officials and researchers in the Arab region to analyse the impact of climate change using geospatial information systems (GIS) tools, especially in the water and agricultural sectors. This series demonstrated the RICCAR methodology and scientific results that helped enhance knowledge and collective action on climate change through the development of knowledge products, methodologies and analysis of the impact of climate change and vulnerabilities in the Arab region. The workshops were attended by more than 200 participants.
The African Youth Water Professionals Forum (Af-YWPF) during Cairo Water Week	Virtual seminar, 19-21 October 2020	International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), Arab Center for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands	The seminar strengthened the capacity of more than 60 young professionals working in the water and agricultural sectors to conduct technical assessments using climate data.

Event	Place and date	Partners	Description
		(ACSAD), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med)	
Four seminars on the water-energy-food nexus in the context of climate change and sustainable development	Virtual seminars on 14-21 and 22-27 October 2020	The Clean Energy Technology Network between the European Union, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), the Environment Center for Arab Cities, the Middle East Desalination Research Center and the Embassy of the Netherlands in the United Arab Emirates	The seminars aimed to strengthen the capacity of over 150 participants in building a common understanding of the water-energy-food nexus as a key driver of climate change mitigation and sustainable development; exchange of information on the best and most effective techniques; discussion of the benefits, opportunities and challenges of adopting an integrated approach to address interconnectedness; providing training on policy tools and options to promote integrated strategies, plans and policies within the nexus framework; and discussion of opportunities for regional cooperation to implement the concept of interdependence.
Workshop on the economic repercussions of climate change and water scarcity in the Levant region	Virtual workshop, 1-3 December 2020	World Bank	The workshop aimed to study the implications of climate change and water scarcity on agricultural productivity and potential impacts on the economies of the Mashreq region.
ESCWA Climate-SDGs Debt Swap Initiative	Virtual, 18 December 2020		The Climate/SDGs Debt Swap Mechanism aims to foster partnerships between Arab states and their creditors to use debt servicing payments to finance climate change and sustainable development initiatives, particularly in countries where continuous borrowing has become a less viable option.
Lima Adaptation Knowledge Initiative (LAKI) Technical workshops (A series of 3 workshops)	Virtual December 2020, 23-25 March 2021, 5 May 2021	UNFCCC Secretariat UNFCCC/Regional Collaborative Center (RCC) Dubai UNEP/Regional Office for West Asia	A series of three virtual meetings were organized under LAKI MENA Phase II engagement for the West Asia/GCC and North Africa subregions. These meetings led to identifying collaborative actions on adaptation projects implemented by regional organizations and institutions to close the priority knowledge gaps in adaptation identified in LAKI phase I.
Arab Forum for Sustainable Development (AFSD) 2021	Virtual 29-31 March 2021		The forum included sessions on reviewing progress towards SDG 13. One of those sessions focused on SDG 13 review: Advancing climate action for a green recovery and accelerated

Event	Place and date	Partners	Description
			<p>progress on the SDGs. It explored innovative financial instruments and new ways of thinking about resource use at the national and community levels to accelerate achievement of SDG 13.</p> <p>Another session tackled the SDG-Climate-Security Nexus in the Arab States and presented how understanding the climate-security nexus, and mainstreaming those considerations in relevant processes, strategies and policies can have a positive impact on achieving the SDGs in a risk-resilient manner.</p>
Webinar on Enhancing Understanding and Expanding Inter-regional and Regional Cooperation on Sand and Dust Storms	7 July 2021	<p>Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)</p> <p>FAO</p> <p>WMO</p>	The webinar aimed to deepen understanding on the risks from sand and dust storms (hazards, vulnerability and resilience) and enhance transboundary cooperation through joint activities and studies across regions.

A. Adaptation and co-benefits

1. Lima Adaptation Knowledge Initiative

4. ESCWA in coordination with the UNFCCC Secretariat, UNFCCC-WGEO Regional Collaboration Centre (RCC Dubai) for the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, the UNEP Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA) and the Global Adaptation Network (GAN) conducted the Lima Adaptation Knowledge Initiative (LAKI) Phase II, which commenced in 2020 focusing on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and North Africa sub-regions. LAKI is facilitated by the Nairobi Work Programme (NWP) and addresses adaptation knowledge barriers in order to facilitate and catalyse the implementation and scaling up of adaptation actions at regional, national and sub-national levels through a participatory process. Several consultations were convened with concerned organizations to map out ongoing initiatives on the identified priority adaptation knowledge gaps (a total of 28 knowledge gaps). These organizations included the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), the National Agricultural Research Center of Jordan (NARC) and the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), among others. Several bilateral discussions took place to ensure that identified interventions can build on existing progress and add value to the ongoing work in the region. Based on the assessment, selected organizations were contacted for further engagement on a number of relevant initiatives which informed the three regional meetings (December 2020, March 2021 and May 2021) throughout the engagement process. Opportunities for funding the proposed initiatives were discussed during the third regional meeting and joint actions are being implemented by collaborative partners. Progress on collaborative actions will be showcased at events throughout the year, including at the COP 26 and the MENA Climate Week. A synthesis report was developed on proposed collaborative actions and thematic areas that were prioritized to close the identified knowledge gaps. These initiatives included the following:

- Development of an advanced evapotranspiration measurement network in the GCC and North Africa sub-regions.
- Development of a drought monitoring and data-sharing programme using digital application and high technology tools.
- Enhancing capacities in implementing climate-smart agriculture approaches and scaling out existing initiatives to other countries.
- Improved availability and accessibility of observed data on the quantity and quality of conventional and non-conventional water resources, particularly in GCC States.
- Application of new methodologies in mangrove studies to more accurately quantify the carbon sequestration potential of mangrove areas.

5. ESCWA is currently collaborating with ICARDA on a project based on LAKI outcomes to integrate long term climate data into crop simulation models to identify climate smart options. Through its technical expertise, ICARDA will valorize the RICCAR data and analysis for operational use in climate smart agriculture. As a result, training materials will be developed for agriculture extension agents on how to integrate and utilize RICCAR data into a typical commonly used crop model. The project will be implemented in three Arab countries with each on a specific case study on rainfed agroecosystem, irrigated agroecosystem and semi-arid Mediterranean agroecosystem.

2. *Technical Note on Adaptation-Mitigation Co-benefits through Nature Based Solutions*

6. The co-benefits approach was initially recognized under the Paris Agreement, and it has been gaining momentum in international climate policy. A technical note was published and aimed to enhance understanding of and assess possible co-benefits approaches as they relate to climate change adaptation and mitigation in key sectors in the Arab region including water, agriculture and energy. The technical note further attempts to enhance knowledge on the potential of nature-based solutions in the Arab region in support of integrated climate adaptation and mitigation action. It concludes that there is substantial untapped potential in the Arab countries for nature-based pathways to support climate change mitigation and adaptation measures and maximize their associated co-benefits. In this context, recommendations for suggested policy measures as well as management approaches are proposed to operationalize nature-based pathways in the context of the Arab region.

B. Climate change assessment and linkages to disaster risk reduction

1. *RICCAR New Projections for the Mashreq Region*

7. ESCWA, in collaboration with partners at the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI), recently released new high-resolution regional climate modelling outputs as part of the RICCAR initiative. Known as the Mashreq Domain, these outputs represent the latest generation in climate modelling established as part of CMIP6. Available at 10 x 10 km grid resolution, the outputs facilitate more detailed analyses across the greater Mashreq, which includes the entire Arabian Peninsula and north-eastern Africa.

8. Modelling outputs have been developed for the SSP5-8.5 scenario, representing an update from RCP8.5 (business as usual) to include shared socioeconomic pathways (SSPs). Outputs are available from six GCMs and include temperature, precipitation, wind speed and shortwave radiation. Furthermore, temperature and precipitation have been bias corrected. Results indicate an average projected increase in temperature across the Mashreq Domain of 0.8 C by 2030 and 1.9 C by 2050, compared to the baseline period of 1995-2014.

2. *Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction Activities in the Arab region*

9. ESCWA has been supporting disaster risk reduction (DDR) activities in the region through several platforms and mechanisms with a focus on addressing linkages between DRR and climate change. At the

global level, ESCWA is contributing to the United Nations Senior Leadership Group on DRR for Resilience (UNSLG). The sixth UNSLG was held in July 2021, where input was provided to the review of progress of the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience. At the regional level, ESCWA has participated in several mechanisms and platforms on DRR such as the Arab Partnership Meetings for DRR and the Arab Coordination Mechanism on DRR under the League of Arab States (LAS). Substantive inputs and contributions were made to the Regional Assessment Report on DRR in the Arab region that will be published in 2021. One contribution is the assessment of vulnerability of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to floods in both Yemen and Syria using projected extreme precipitation indices developed by RICCAR in coordination with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The Risk Assessment Framework for the Arab region that was developed by ESCWA with support of RICCAR is foundational to developing risk-informed policies and will be utilized in studies related to DRR and climate forecasting.

10. ESCWA, LAS and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) have convened seven sessions of the Arab Climate Outlook Forum (ArabCOF) since 2017. The main objective of the ArabCOF is to generate consensus on seasonal forecasting (twice a year) in the Arab region and carry out climate change assessments of extreme events and validation of previous forecasts and the efficiency of models used. The seventh session of the ArabCOF and the fourth session of the Gulf Cooperation Council Climate Outlook Forum (GCC-COF) were held in June 2021 and issued the seasonal forecasting for the region for June-August 2021. The forum also discussed long-term climate trends based on RICCAR predictions and addressed the importance of tailoring meteorological services and products to sector needs, such as early warning in agriculture.

11. The Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies at ESCWA and the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM) at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) are co-leading the working group on regional collaboration of the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms. This coalition aims to enhance understanding of sand and dust storms and their impacts, vulnerability and resilience, with emphasis on transboundary and interregional cooperation. A global webinar was convened on 7 July 2021 to improve awareness around the socioeconomic impact of sand and dust storms and their transboundary nature and showcase examples of collaboration at the regional level around the world to cope with this hazard.

C. Climate finance

1. Needs-Based Financing Project in the Arab Region

12. ESCWA in coordination with UNFCCC and LAS conducted a technical assessment on climate finance in the Arab region. A consultative approach was followed through several regional workshops for stakeholder engagement. Three workshops were held in this process since November 2019 to engage with concerned ministries such as ministries of finance, environment, water, energy and other ministries in Arab States, negotiators, development banks, national and private banks and international organizations. The technical assessment was envisaged to inform the development of an Arab Climate Finance Mobilization and Access Strategy in order to enhance the mobilization of and access to finance, and to mobilize climate finance and investment for the implementation of priority climate mitigation and adaptation actions in Arab States. A task force was formed from Arab experts and partner organizations to develop the strategy based on the outcomes of the validation workshop in June 2021 to adopt the elements of the strategy and prepare the outreach plans. The developed strategy will be briefed at the COP 26 in November 2021 and presented at the MENA Climate Week in March 2022.

2. ESCWA Climate-SDGs Debt Swap Initiative

13. ESCWA launched the Climate/SDG Debt Swap Mechanism in December 2020, complemented by the Donor Nexus Initiative. The mechanism aims to support Member States in bridging their climate finance gaps, high debt burdens and fiscal pressures, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It converts foreign debt service payments into domestic investment for implementing climate-resilient projects through

collaborative arrangements between debtors, creditors and donors. For debtor countries, it provides relief from the payment of interest on external debt, while increasing sustainable public investment in climate-resilient projects that advance the SDGs and Paris Agreement. For creditors, the amount of the debt swap allocated for climate-resilient projects increases the official development assistance disbursement/climate finance pledges that accelerate implementation without adding extra burdens on their budgets.

14. An international expert Advisory Committee was formulated to operationalize the mechanism, and its first meeting was held in March 2021. Research is ongoing to develop a regional standardized framework of key performance indicators (KPIs) on climate action/SDGs progress to evaluate projects/programmes eligible for the use of debt swap proceeds. As Jordan has showed interest in adopting the debt-swap mechanism, it was selected as a pilot case where ESCWA supported the establishment of a National Task Force in Jordan to operationalize the mechanism. The Task Force has mapped out projects/programmes earmarked for donor funding through the debt swap. Adaptation projects and particularly water projects were identified as clear priorities for funding. Egypt and Tunisia have also expressed interest in joining the Climate/SDGs Debt Swap Mechanism, and discussions are underway with concerned authorities to initiate the process.

II. Sustainable energy management and climate change

15. The following table sets out selected technical and advisory missions, meetings and workshops undertaken since December 2019 to address the cross-cutting issues of sustainable energy management and climate change.

Event	Place and Date	Partners	Description
Participation in high-level bilateral meetings between ESCWA, led by the Executive Secretary, and GEIDCO led by the Secretary-General, where a memorandum of understanding was signed on joint work for two years and bilateral meetings with both OAPEC and IsDB	Madrid, 2-13 December 2019	GEIDCO, IsDB and OAPEC	Bilateral meetings with OAPEC and IsDB focussed on building an effective partnership on Climate Change.
Symposium towards sustainable and clean energy for a better life and future	Virtual seminar, 19 August, 2020	Arab Science Week	This event addressed sustainable energy and targeted the young generation to highlight the importance of sustainable energy and its interconnections with water, climate change, food and the Sustainable Development Goals.
Meeting on Smart & Green Grids	Virtual meeting, 8 October 2020	Organization for Development and Cooperation of the Global Energy Interconnection, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Tunisian Company of Electricity and Gas	The meeting focused on the essential contribution of smart and green grids in the areas of energy transition and climate change.

Event	Place and Date	Partners	Description
Series of four seminars on the water-energy-food nexus in the context of climate change and sustainable development	Virtual seminars on 14-21 and 22-27 October 2020	The Clean Energy Technology Network between the European Union, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), the Environment Center for Arab Cities, the Middle East Desalination Research Center and the Embassy of the Netherlands in the United Arab Emirates	The seminars aimed to strengthen the capacity of over 150 participants to build a common understanding of the water-energy-food nexus as a key driver of climate change mitigation and sustainable development; exchange of information on the best and most effective techniques; discussion of the benefits, opportunities and challenges of adopting an integrated approach to address interconnectedness; training on policy tools and options to promote integrated strategies, plans and policies within the nexus framework; and discussion of opportunities for regional cooperation to implement the concept of interdependence.
Side event on Energy Transition in the Arab Region: Challenges and Opportunities	A virtual side event on the sidelines of the 2020 Global Energy Interconnection Conference and the Asian Energy and Electricity Conference, 4 November 2020	The Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization, the League of Arab States and the Islamic Development Bank	This side event addressed the remarkable progress in SDG 7 in the Arab region, the challenges, and opportunities in the field of energy transition, the interconnection of regional electric grids and the electricity market, the role that investments in clean and renewable energy can play and the role of access to finance in accelerating the transition.
Participation in the T20 and G20 meetings	In-person and virtual meetings in 2020	G20 and T20 meetings organized by Saudi Arabia	ESCWA highlighted the role of the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies in supporting member states in achieving sustainable development goals by guiding policies based on scientific approaches and achieving a daptation and mitigation co-benefits in water and agriculture sectors.
Workshop on the Financing the Upscaling of Building Energy Efficiency Programmes for Climate Change Mitigation and Sustainable Development in the Arab Region	Virtual, 3 December 2020	IsDB, World Bank, UNECE, GIZ, KAPSARC, PEEB	The workshop aimed to present the findings of the Toolkit for Energy Efficiency Financing Instruments for Buildings in the Arab region for Climate Change Mitigation and Sustainable Development and enhance capacity-building in developing financing instruments for upscaling EE investments in the building sector.
United Nations Virtual Roundtable on Extractive Industries as an Engine for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region	Two virtual meetings: ESCWA roundtable: 15	Climate Action Team of the Secretary-General, UNDP, UNDESA, UNECE, UNCTAD, ESCAP, ECA and	The meeting is one of a serious of regional roundtables aiming to present a set of recommendations highlighting the role of extractives as a driver for sustainable development in the Arab

Event	Place and Date	Partners	Description
	March 2021 Global roundtable: 25 May 2021	ECLAC	Region. A regional policy brief “Extractive Industries: Transition to Sustainable Systems” was published.
High Level Dialogue on Energy Ministerial Thematic Forums	Virtual meetings 21-25 June 2021	SE4ALL, UNDESA, UNDP, WHO, UNICEF, ENERGIA, GWNE, SEWA	ESCWA organized the Side Event on Young People Engagement to Accelerate Global Energy Transition and Cross-sectoral Interlinkages, highlighting ongoing engagement in advancing a just and inclusive energy transition and opportunities to support cross-sectoral interlinkages between energy and other SDGs. Also the Side Event on “Women-led rural development through renewable energy” was organized under the REGEND initiative that highlighted the opportunities offered by renewable energy technologies in rural areas. In addition, the thematic report on Enabling SDGs through Inclusive, Just Energy Transitions was launched.
Participation in the Green Hydrogen Policies in the MENA Region: Taking into Account the Hydrogen-Water-Climate Nexus	22 June 2021	Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung	The meeting highlighted carbon neutrality and sustainable Green Hydrogen production in the MENA region.
Participation in the 4 th Technical Workshop on Climate Change: The Role of Circular Carbon Economy and Green Initiatives in Combatting Climate Change	7 July 2021	OPEC	ESCWA highlighted the role of the circular carbon economy in combatting climate change.

16. ESCWA has been implementing the Regional Initiative to Promote Small-Scale Renewable Energy Applications in Rural Areas of the Arab Region (REGEND) since 2018. Funded by the Swedish International Development Agency, REGEND aims to improve energy, water and food security, enhance resilience to climate change and mainstream the SDGs into regional and national policy processes. The initiative also strives to improve the livelihoods of rural communities by encouraging investments in small-scale, environment-friendly and affordable renewable energy applications, while promoting gender equality and social inclusion to support rural development. The League of Arab States, represented by its Energy Department, the National Agency for Energy Management in Tunisia and the Jordanian Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources are participating in the initiative.

17. ESCWA has been implementing a UNDA project on “Up-scaling Energy Efficiency in the residential and services sectors in the Arab Region” since late 2018. This project aims to enhance the capacity of ESCWA Member States to improve energy efficiency in the building sector, achieve a change in the level of implementation of energy efficiency programmes in existing residential and non-residential buildings and pave

the way for a regional initiative. The project is being implemented in Jordan and Tunisia, in cooperation with the Jordanian Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources and the National Agency for Energy Management in Tunisia (ANME). The project includes different activities related to enhancing energy efficiency policies, projects and programmes in both countries, as well as building the capacity of officials and private actors with respect to major issues related to upscaling energy efficiency in the building sector in both countries.

18. In 2020, ESCWA participated in the Group 20 and Think 20 (T20) events that were organized by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As part of the T20 task force “Climate Change and Environment”, ESCWA contributed to the development of a policy brief “A Carbon Management System of Innovation: Towards a Circular Carbon Economy”. This policy brief calls on G20 governments to support a wide range of climate change mitigation approaches through the Circular Carbon Economy (CCE) framework, proposed by the Saudi G20 presidency, as an essential means to a low-carbon future. This enables cooperation to consolidate efforts in upscaling carbon management technologies and incentivizes carbon neutralization across “hard-to-abate industries”. In this context, the COVID-19 pandemic offers the opportunity for G20 Governments to “build back better” using economic stimulus packages leveraging CCE for a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable future.

19. On 15 March 2021, the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General and ESCWA jointly convened the virtual roundtable “Extractive Industries as an Engine for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region”. This was the fifth roundtable in a series of regional roundtables on extractive industries, hosted by the United Nations Regional Economic Commissions. High-level panellists and speakers included one royal prince, one prime minister and six ministers, senior representatives from intergovernmental organizations, regional commissions and Member States and representatives from academia, think tanks, research institutions, civil society and the private sector. Discussions covered emerging trends in extractive industries in the Arab region in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the multifaceted vulnerabilities the region faces with reference to rents, tax revenues, labour market-fiscal stability, productive chains, technology and innovation, value addition and local content, social and economic inclusion and environmental sustainability. Discussions also covered how the initiative Financing for Development (FfD) in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond is relevant to extractive industries in the Arab region. The findings and outcomes of this roundtable fed into the concluding High-Level Global Roundtable on Extractive Industries as an Engine for Sustainable Development convened by the United Nations Secretary-General.

III. The Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies

A. Operationalization of the ACCCP

20. The establishment of the ACCCP was welcomed by member States in resolution 329 (XXX) at ESCWA’s 30th session on 28 June 2018. The resolution requests the ACCCP to support member States through five pillars of work focused on the following: (a) providing technical assistance and advisory services to Arab States; (b) building the capacity of Arab States and regional stakeholders to strengthen institutional frameworks and develop programmes and policies; (c) supporting regional platforms to harmonize positions and build regional consensus; (d) promoting comprehensive responses to climate-related challenges affecting water, energy and food security; and (e) providing access to knowledge products and regional data and information using the Regional Knowledge Hub.

21. The Centre consolidates the work of ESCWA on climate change under a common umbrella and it provides technical assistance and capacity development services to Arab States in the areas of climate change assessment, adaptation, mitigation and negotiations, and in implementing the Paris Agreement. The Centre also tailors its services according to the assistance requests received from member States, including those requested and articulated in resolutions adopted by the ministerial councils convened under the auspices of the League of Arab States.

B. Building new partnerships under the ACCCP

22. During the past two years, a series of strategic partnerships were established under the ACCCP with specialized global and regional bodies on climate change issues, and they played an important role in advancing and scaling up the work of the Centre.

1. Partnerships with UNFCCC

23. ESCWA signed four memorandums of understanding with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2019 to enhance cooperation on the following:

(a) Improving the readiness of ESCWA Member States in implementing the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement

A workshop was held in November 2020 in coordination with the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE) mandated by the Conference of Parties (COP) which aimed to enhance the technical capacity of experts from developing country Parties in implementing the existing measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) arrangements under the Convention and understanding the modalities, procedures and guidelines (MPGs) for the enhanced transparency framework (ETF) under the Paris Agreement. Another workshop will be held in coordination with UNFCCC, UNEP/Regional Office for West Asia during 4-7 October 2021 and the Arab Negotiation group which aims to enhance technical capacities of national experts in implementing the existing MRV arrangements under the Convention and preparing for transition to the ETF. The training will further discuss the institutional arrangements for ETF implementation, and it will introduce and socialize the ETF concepts and provisions of tracking progress in implementing and achieving NDCs, which is a new and mandatory element of the ETF. The capacity-building workshop will conclude with a Regional Dialogue on Climate Information and the ETF which aims to facilitate further engagement and networking between experts, negotiators and decision makers in countries and international organizations with a view to improving access to financial and technical support as applicable.

(b) Capacity-building on nationally determined contributions (NDCs)

ESCWA in partnership with UNFCCC and other United Nations and non-United Nations organizations in the Asia-Pacific and MENA regions developed and shared a survey with States in the two regions to seek feedback on the progress and features of their NDCs. The survey was comprised of 15 questions focused on the priorities and plans for NDCs as well as the challenges associated with their development and available support. The survey was sent to all UNFCCC National Focal Points from States in Asia-Pacific and MENA in August 2020, and 32 States responded, including 7 Arab States. Based on the survey results, adaptation activities are a priority for many States in these regions. Also, many indicated that alignment of the new/updated NDCs with existing policies and planning as well as increased cross-sector coordination are important aspects of NDC enhancement. Access to data and funding and capacity issues in modelling for projections were identified as major challenges for NDC enhancement. Following the survey, ESCWA in partnership with UNFCCC- WGEO RCC Dubai, the UNFCCC secretariat, NDC Partnership, UNDP and UNEP held a virtual workshop for the MENA region to enhance understanding of national experts on the process and provisions for NDCs during 26-28 October 2020. The workshop familiarized participants with guidance on NDCs from the Katowice Climate Package and discussed the NDC updating process. Participants also exchanged experiences and lessons learned from their countries on the ongoing efforts for updated/new NDCs. Furthermore, ESCWA contributed to another workshop on NDCs related to Good Practices in NDC Update and Implementation for Asia and MENA organized by NDC Partnership and UNFCCC Regional Collaboration Centres in Bangkok and Dubai in March 2021.

(c) Needs-Based Financing Project in the Arab Region (since 2019) to assess finance needs for climate action and design an Arab climate finance mobilization and access strategy

Refer to paragraph 12, page 7.

(d) Lima Adaptation Knowledge Initiative (since early 2020) to identify and foster partnerships with relevant organizations working on climate change adaptation

Refer to paragraph 4, page 5.

2. Issue-Based Coalition Coordination on Climate Change

24. ESCWA under the regional coordination mechanisms “Issues-based Coalition” coordinated activities on climate, food security and environmental actions in the Arab States through collaboration and strengthened partnership with key regional United Nations and non-United Nations stakeholders. This regional mechanism provides support to countries in adopting a nexus approach to climate, water, energy, food and the environment through identifying priorities and goals in the Western Asia and Arab region. On climate change, two main activities were led by ESCWA dealing with capacity-building on reviewing the NDCs and on climate negotiations. Several coordination meetings were held with other partners including United Nations organizations (e.g., UNEP, UNFCCC, UNDRR, UNDP, FAO, IOM, WFP, UNOPS, NDC-Partnership, etc.) and non-United Nations agencies including the League of Arab States (LAS) and Arab Organization for Agriculture Development. A matrix was developed on joint activities by all partners that have been implemented in 2020 and tasks planned for 2021.

3. Partnership with the Global Center on Adaptation

25. As part of the efforts to advance adaptation to climate change in the region, ESCWA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Global Center on Adaptation to cooperate during the period June 2021 to May 2022, with potential for the extension beyond this period, in the following areas: (a) accelerating, innovating and scaling up adaptation action for a climate resilient world; (b) promoting knowledge and data platforms to drive and support global adaptation action; (c) building capacity to increase access to finance for climate adaptation projects and programmes; (d) increasing the outreach and dissemination of the State and Trends in Adaptation Report series; and (e) Advocating the importance of adaptation in the Arab region. Moreover, the Executive Secretary of ESCWA has been involved as a member of the Advisory Committee of the GCA State and Trends in Adaptation work programme. In the context of climate finance and innovative financial arrangements, the GCA has been engaged in the ESCWA Climate/SDGs Debt Swap Mechanism Advisory Committee.

4. New Partnerships in the Energy Sector

26. REGEND has successfully grown its existing partnerships and develop new supplementary ones that were not originally envisaged in the project document and inception report. Partners were also able to use ESCWA and REGEND as a platform for the dissemination of their work. All these partnerships constituted an important added value to the Project and enabled it to formulate and design customized solutions and recommendations and to communicate and deliver key messages that are all adapted to the national and local context of each targeted country and community. The existing partnerships include:

- Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD).
- Institute for Global Prosperity (IGP), University College London (UCL), RELIEF Center (RC) and Chatham House (CH).
- Cowater International – Sustainable Energy and Economic Development Project (SEED) – to support Jordan activities.

- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).
- Sida/National Energy Research Center (NERC)/Royal Scientific Society (RSS) – Jordan.
- Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT) – Jordan.
- International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).
- General Commission for Regional Development (CGDR) – Tunisia.
- Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (MEMR) – Jordan.
- Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) – Jordan.
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), UN Women and UN Environment Programme (UNEP).
- International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy (ENERGIA).
- ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE).

27. The new supplementary partnerships include the Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) and the Global Women’s Network for the Energy Transition (GWNET) with whom REGEND collaborated by organizing a side event on “Women-led Rural Development Through Renewable Energy” on the side-lines of the Ministerial Thematic Forums For The High-Level Dialogue On Energy in June 2020. The side event convened regional and international partners active in gender empowerment, rural development and renewable energy, where they exchanged experiences and lessons learned on the challenges and opportunities facing gender empowerment and rural development and explored the opportunities and solutions that renewable energy technologies can offer. On the other hand, in partnership with ENERGIA, SEWA and GWNET, REGEND is establishing a rural gender network that will focus on reverse knowledge transfer between the beneficiary regions, with joint activities planned for the last quarter of 2021.

28. In September 2019, ESCWA renewed the Memorandum of Understanding it had previously signed with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in 2015 for an extended period of five years. The MoU aims to enhance cooperation on joint activities to support the Arab States in the renewable energy field, such as accelerating renewable energy deployment, collaborating with the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies to strengthen the contribution of renewable energy to climate change mitigation and adaptation and enhancing cooperation to mobilize investments and undertake research.

29. ESCWA has partnered with the Arab Union of Electricity, since September 2017, through an MoU that supports the joint efforts to collaborate on sustainable pathways and action plans to achieve the SDG7 targets and sustainable energy development through enhancing energy access (including off-grid applications and rural electrification) and promoting capacity-building knowledge sharing workshops on energy efficiency and renewable energy and knowledge transfer.

30. ESCWA partnered with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) through a joint declaration signed in October 2018 for the purpose of providing support to the relevant countries in their assessment, preparation and implementation of national action plans related to their transitions to sustainable energy systems and reaching the targets of SDG 7. It also seeks to catalyse investments in energy access, energy efficiency, renewable energy and innovative financing, including through mobilizing bilateral and global funds. Under this agreement, ESCWA has also developed the “Financing the Upscaling of Building Energy Efficiency Programmes in the Arab Region” report which is part of the partners’ efforts to advise Arab countries on available instruments for financing sustainable energy transitions, identify suitable ways to make greater use of international financing means available for the building sectors and build the capacity of member States to secure funding for upscaling energy efficiency for climate change mitigation and sustainable development.

C. Advancing work on climate change negotiation and implementation of the Paris Agreement

31. Arab Governments have been actively engaged in international negotiations pursued under the UNFCCC, and the role of ESCWA and the ACCCP has been strategic in strengthening the capacity of the Arab Group of Negotiators. Thirteen training workshops were conducted since 2013 in partnership with LAS, UNESCO (Cairo Office) and UNEP which aimed to improve the skills for negotiations and provide technical support on different aspects of the Paris Agreement, even prior to its official adoption by Parties. The ACCCP has also been providing support to Member States for the many reporting requirements under the Paris Agreement such as implementing the NDCs, enhancing understanding of the existing measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) system and preparation for transparency reporting under the ETF.

32. The following table sets out the meetings and workshops undertaken and participated in since COP 25 in December 2019. As COP 26 was postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a series of virtual climate dialogues were held throughout 2020-2021 to advance the work on key pending negotiation issues. The June momentum was held in June 2020, the climate dialogues were convened during November-December 2020, and lastly the sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies were held during May-June 2021. ESCWA, through the ACCCP, supported the Arab Negotiation Group meetings and provided substantive inputs to these sessions. Support was provided on different agenda items such as market and non-market mechanism (Article 6), transparency of action and support, common timeframes for NDCs, Koronivia joint work on agriculture, climate finance and the global goal on adaptation.

Event	Place and date	Partners	Description
Contribution to the Conference of the Parties (COP25) and the preparation of side events at COP25	Madrid, 2-13 December 2019	The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Arab Negotiating Group on Climate Change, the Islamic Development Bank, the League of Arab States, the Gulf Cooperation Council and many Arab countries and other partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring the progress of negotiations on a daily basis, convening side meetings and providing technical advice to member States during side and special events. Conducting a high-level workshop to follow up on the achievements of Arab countries in their climate actions. Participation in an open dialogue with civil society and academics about the official position of Member States and their obligations to reduce and adapt to climate change. Preparing a workshop to launch the ESCWA report on tracking SDG 7: a report on progress achieved in the field of energy 2019 in the Arab region. Participation in the UNDESA event on the nexus between water, energy and food. Participation in the workshop for Iraq to discuss setting priorities and measures for adaptation and mitigation in the Green Climate Fund (GCF) readiness project.

Event	Place and date	Partners	Description
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting a side event in coordination with the UN Regional Commissions on the regional perspectives of climate action and plans and interlinkages to sustainable development.
Contributing to the Arab Group Meetings on Climate Change	Three Virtual meetings, 22 April, 6 July, 22 October 2020	The League of Arab States and the Arab Negotiating Group on Climate Change	The meetings discussed the developments and assessment of global negotiations on climate change and prioritizing the Arab position on climate change issues considering the special circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Workshop on Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA)	Virtual Workshop, 27 July 2020	The League of Arab States and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	The deliberations of the workshop focused on ways to include agriculture in negotiations on climate change and providing an introduction to KJWA, which includes 6 key topics related to the agricultural sector in the Arab region.
Virtual workshop for the MENA Region to enhance understanding on the process and provisions for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)	Virtual 26-28 October 2020	Regional Collaboration Centre (RCC Dubai), NDC Partnership, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	The workshop aimed to enhance technical capacities of national experts from interested Parties in MENA on the relevant provisions and processes on NDCs.
CGE virtual training on the existing MRV arrangements and the enhanced transparency framework for the MENA region	Virtual 3-5 November 2020	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)/Consultative Group of Experts (CGE)	The main objective of the training is to enhance the technical capacity of experts from the MENA region Parties in implementing the existing measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) arrangements under the Convention and understanding the modalities, procedures and guidelines (MPGs) for the enhanced transparency framework (ETF) under the Paris Agreement, with a view to facilitating developing country Parties' preparation for the implementation of the ETF.
The UNFCCC June Meetings	Climate Change June Meetings 31 May - 17 June 2021 (Daily coordination)	LAS Arab Group of Negotiators on Climate Change	The meetings discussed the developments and assessment of global negotiations on climate change throughout the Subsidiary Bodies Sessions that were held during May and June in preparation for the COP 26

Event	Place and date	Partners	Description
	meetings with the Arab Group)		and formulation of the Arab position on different agenda items.

33. In response to the Arab Negotiation Group's requests, ESCWA is developing a series of technical notes on the following topics:

(a) Implementation of the Paris Agreement and Enhanced Climate Actions in the Arab Region

This technical note provides an overview on progress towards the Paris Agreement since COP 25 in Madrid in 2019. It discusses major climate negotiations issues; namely common timeframes for NDCs, cooperative market and non-market approaches (Article 6), transparency, loss and damage, climate finance, response measures and the global goal on adaptation. The paper also provides an overview on the status of reporting under the Paris Agreement by the Arab States. A special focus is dedicated to Article 6, transparency and adaptation, requested by the Arab Group of Negotiators due to their being the most critical pending issues for COP 26. Furthermore, the paper covers the discourse on post-pandemic recovery and highlights existing gaps and needs for capacity-building for a sustainable recovery in the Arab region. Country-specific examples and case studies are elaborated throughout the paper on many of the different topics discussed. The paper concludes with a set of policy recommendations to enhance technical understanding and capacities on outstanding issues on climate negotiations and to engage with other regional and negotiation groups to mobilize support for common Arab positions.

(b) Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA)

The LAS and FAO in partnership with ESCWA organized the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture Virtual Regional Workshop in July 2020 which brought together climate change agricultural experts and negotiators from the Arab States with representatives from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the EU and the African Group of Negotiators, as well as resource persons from FAO and ESCWA. The workshop aimed to exchange views on experiences and needs of the Arab Group of Negotiators on enhancing its capacities, coordination and negotiating positions around agriculture and climate change. Participants shared regional positions and country experiences on regional and country issues related to climate change and agricultural productivity, livelihoods and sustainability and the barriers for climate action. The workshop also discussed other related issues such as the European Union's Farm-to-Fork initiative.

On the same subject, ESCWA developed a technical report, to be published soon, which aims to present the implications of the Koronivia process and the relevance in addressing challenges related to Arab agriculture and to provide technical support to develop common positions and necessary climate actions. The report concludes with an outlook for a resilient Arab agriculture sector including recommendations for coordinated actions for engagement in climate-related measures and intervention areas for enhanced climate actions in data collection and monitoring, resource management, capacity-building and finance for the agriculture sector in the Arab region.

(c) Technical note on Adaptation-Mitigation Co-benefits through Nature Based Solutions

Refer to paragraph 6, page 6.

(d) Discussion Paper on Methodologies for Assessing Economic Impacts of Climate Change on Key Sectors

The Arab region is highly vulnerable to the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of climate change, and under the business as usual scenario, warming in parts of the region could reach up to 5 °C by end of century. Climate change affects all economic sectors whether directly or indirectly and the costs are significant. However, quantifying the costs of climate change is a complex and challenging task especially since emissions are cross-border and long-lasting, and even though there have been many efforts to model the impacts of climate change, there has not been a one-size-fits-all model. This paper is being prepared to provide an overview of approaches reported by Arab States in formal submissions to the UNFCCC (including NDCs, BURs, National Communications, etc.) to estimate the cost of the impacts of climate change and associated response measures. It also reviews the most prominent climate-economic models that assess the impact of climate change on economic growth while discussing each model's characteristics and limitations as well as related policy evaluation.

IV. Future activities

34. ESCWA will support Arab States in the formulation and implementation of their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) as part of the UN for NAPs Partnership (UN – 4 NAPs) with the UNFCCC and more than 30 United Nations agencies. The partnership was officially launched in August 2021, and the initial phase will focus on supporting least developed countries (LDCs) as well as developing countries.

35. ESCWA is one of the co-organizers of the first Regional Climate Week for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) which will be hosted by the Government of the United Arab Emirates in March 2022. The MENA Climate Week will be part of the umbrella of Regional Climate Weeks, held annually in the Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean regions. The Climate Week aims to provide a platform for regional and global stakeholders to showcase climate action in the MENA and for institutions to advance their work by garnering the engagement of key stakeholders in the region as well as to connect with other regional climate weeks.

36. ESCWA will be hosting the Second Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Disaster-related Statistics in May 2022 in coordination with the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics (IAEG) of the United Nations Statistical Commission taken at its 50th Session in 2019 as a formal mechanism to advance a common statistical framework on disaster-related statistics.

37. ESCWA, with the other United Nations Regional Commissions and in partnership with other international organizations, is jointly organizing the eleventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development to take place on September 20-24, 2021. The Forum aims to explore how to improve access to affordable and clean energy for all and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the carbon footprint of the energy sector in the member States. The Forum will look into ways for countries to reconcile the reality of fossil fuels' share of the energy mix with the need to address climate change while supporting sustainable development, enhancing integration of the energy markets and facilitating the transition to a sustainable energy system.

38. ESCWA with IsDB will organize a workshop as part of the Financing the Upscaling of Building Energy Efficiency Programmes for Climate Change Mitigation and Sustainable Development in the Arab Region project. The workshop will highlight how to effectively develop financing instruments for upscaling energy efficiency investments in the building sector and will disseminate the report "Toolkit for Energy Efficiency Financing Instruments for Buildings in the Arab Region for Climate Change Mitigation and Sustainable Development" which was developed by ESCWA with the support of IsDB.

39. ESCWA will contribute to the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP 26) that will be held during 31 October - 12 November 2021 at Glasgow, the United Kingdom through supporting the Arab Negotiation Group coordination meetings and organizing and providing inputs to side events in coordination with partner organizations.

V. Way forward

40. Progress in the area of climate change in the Arab region will require the following actions:

(a) Enhance regional coordination on climate action through the work of the committees, under the ACCCP, on climate change modelling and impact assessment, adaptation, mitigation and technology; and continue to support and further inform the formulation of common Arab positions for global climate negotiations;

(b) Encourage further research on the co-benefits approach for adaptation and mitigation actions, including nature-based solutions, and conduct studies on adaptation measures and options in the energy sector in order to reduce the vulnerability of the energy sector to the impacts of climate change, particularly the accelerated extreme weather events affecting the Arab region;

(c) Accelerate the adoption of a circular carbon economy framework and incorporate circular economy principles into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to promote resource efficiency, eco-design, waste management and other sustainable production and consumption measures.

41. To assist member States in carrying out the above actions, the ESCWA secretariat will continue to do the following:

(a) Ensure that climate change adaptation is linked to disaster risk reduction based on climate forecasts developed by the ArabCOF and on disaster loss databases established under the Sendai Framework; and assess the transboundary impacts of sand and dust storms using the new RICCAR projections;

(b) Support member States to mobilize climate finance through strengthening cooperation with international and regional financial institutions and to build capacities on development and pipelining project proposals, particularly for adaptation actions in addition to mitigation projects. Other mechanisms can be also operationalized such as Debt Swap Mechanism (DSM) including debt for SDGs and climate swaps, allowing countries to prioritize resources for sustainable development initiatives.

(c) Support member States in developing policies to accelerate the pace of attaining sustainable energy targets as part of their climate change mitigation strategies and set sustainable energy goals as part of their national priorities.

(d) Strengthen the national capacities of member States in the areas of setting sustainable energy policies, particularly with respect to optimizing their energy mix, improving energy efficiency and ensuring a smooth energy transition, while addressing the associated vulnerabilities.
