

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COUNCIL**

Distr.  
LIMITED  
E/ESCWA/C.3/2023/CRP.1  
E/ESCWA/C.4/2023/CRP.1  
9 May 2023  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

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

Joint meeting of the Committee on Energy  
and the Committee on Water Resources  
Beirut, 20 June 2023

**Advancing the climate change agenda  
in the water and energy sectors****Summary**

The present document informs the joint meeting of the Committee on Energy and the Committee on Water Resources of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The document sets out key areas of work to support member States in enhancing resilience to climate change through the adoption of adaptation and mitigation processes, with a focus on the water and energy sectors, under the umbrella of the ESCWA Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies. The document also addresses climate finance and presents the key negotiation outputs of the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference. Moreover, it provides recommendations to promote climate action, in preparation for the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference, which will be held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, from 30 November to 12 December 2023.

The Committee on Energy and the Committee on Water Resources are invited to review the present document and comment thereon, and to discuss national and regional priorities for the coming years in the field of climate change.

## Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction .....	1–2	3
Background: Importance of mainstreaming climate action into development planning ..	3–5	3
<i>Chapter</i>		
<b>I. Strengthening resilience to climate change</b> .....	6–14	4
A. Joint measures to combat sand and dust storms .....	9–10	4
B. Involving multiple stakeholders in the protection of biodiversity .....	11–12	5
C. New regional climate projections .....	13–14	5
<b>II. Assessments to enhance adaptation in the water sector</b> .....	15–19	6
A. Assessing the impact of climate change on groundwater resources .....	16–17	6
B. Assessing the impact of climate change on transboundary water resources ..	18	6
C. Preparing watershed-level climate resilience packages.....	19	6
<b>III. Addressing climate change in the energy sector</b> .....	20–26	7
A. Reducing small-scale renewable energy risks in rural areas of the Arab region.....	20–22	7
B. Pathways to net-zero emission targets by mid-century .....	23–26	7
<b>IV. Supporting climate finance efforts</b> .....	27–30	8
<b>V. Climate change negotiations and the Paris Agreement</b> .....	31–35	9
A. Twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties .....	31–33	9
B. Supporting the Arab Group of Negotiators .....	34–35	9
<b>VI. Recommendations and the way forward</b> .....	36–38	10

## Introduction

1. The present document informs the joint meeting of the Committee on Energy and the Committee on Water Resources of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The document sets out key areas of work to support member States in enhancing resilience to climate change through the adoption of adaptation and mitigation processes, with a focus on the water and energy sectors, under the umbrella of the ESCWA Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies. The document also addresses climate finance and presents the key negotiation outputs of the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 27).
2. The Committee on Energy and the Committee on Water Resources are invited to review the present document and comment thereon, and to discuss national and regional priorities for the coming years in the field of climate change.

### **Background: Importance of mainstreaming climate action into development planning**

3. Mainstreaming climate action into development planning in the Arab region is vital to enhancing resilience in key sectors. A holistic approach to climate action is needed in the development of sectoral strategies by integrating climate considerations into all stages of national development processes, so as to tackle complex and interrelated challenges posed by climate change, and to promote necessary adaptation and mitigation processes.
4. In this context, ESCWA is currently preparing a joint report with the Islamic Development Bank on mainstreaming climate action into national development planning in the Arab region. The report examines key areas that define the conceptual framework for the successful mainstreaming of climate action into national plans. These include the following:
  - **Assessments for informed planning and decision-making:** discussing the multidimensional risks related to climate change in the region, and strategies to strengthen the science-policy interface; and highlighting the need for comprehensive data to inform policymaking.
  - **Integrated planning to advance climate commitments:** considering institutional frameworks that enhance communication and collaboration and provide an enabling environment for integrated planning; and mainstreaming climate priorities through development planning processes at the national and sectoral levels.
  - **Inclusive budgetary and regulatory processes:** examining existing regulatory and legal processes relating to budgets so as to mitigate climate risks and vulnerability thereto; promoting the allocation of resources and the provision of required guarantees and regulatory standards; and mainstreaming climate considerations into policies, plans and projects.
  - **Financing climate action:** reviewing international and local climate financing flows into the region; optimizing the benefits of integrated cost models in assessing needs and receiving funding; and discussing the contribution of public and private investments in climate action in line with national development plans.
  - **Monitoring and evaluation for increased accountability:** assessing the monitoring and evaluation process of climate action mainstreaming into national development plans and existing accountability frameworks, strengthening monitoring, and following up on the development of an enabling institutional environment and the generation of comprehensive data.
  - **Access to knowledge and capacity-building:** stressing the importance of promoting regional assessments, knowledge sharing and capacity-building in the region to increase understanding of climate actions and enhance relevant institutional and human capacities, so as to achieve integrated climate action planning.

The joint report provides examples and lessons learned from the region, and is expected to be officially launched later in the year.

5. ESCWA aims to adopt the above-mentioned approach and to mainstream climate considerations into its projects and work programmes, particularly in the water and energy sectors. In this context, it published a study on concrete and integrated projects that draw on the science-policy interface by modelling changes in climate and studying their impact on the severity of extreme climate events (floods, drought and sand and dust storms) and on water resources (river basins and groundwater levels), and their impact on other sectors such as agriculture and ecosystems. The energy sector plays a significant role in addressing the challenges of climate change and in enhancing resilience by promoting renewable energy technologies and increasing their efficiency.

## **I. Strengthening resilience to climate change**

6. Resilience to climate change reduces vulnerability to climate risks and mitigates the impact of climate change. This can be achieved by combining efforts to increase resilience with efforts to reduce emissions in sectoral policies, prioritizing biodiversity preservation, controlling climate risks, and achieving the water-food-energy nexus. The present section outlines efforts to strengthen resilience to climate change, based on scientific knowledge and through regional cooperation.

7. Building on previous partnerships with the Government of Sweden, ESCWA launched a new project in May 2022, funded by Sweden. The project, which is expected to run until December 2025, focuses on regional cooperation to promote integrated and inclusive sustainable development and enhance resilience to climate change, through action in the areas of water resources, agriculture, energy and ecosystems.

8. The project also aims to support Arab countries in accelerating efforts to fulfil their commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, adopted pursuant to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The project's objectives include the following:

- Promoting informed policymaking based on scientific findings and analytical processes, so as to understand common regional challenges associated with sand and dust storms, groundwater, biodiversity, and food system value chains that affect land and water resources.
- Strengthening institutions by promoting dialogue among stakeholders involved in protecting biodiversity and transforming food systems and access to energy, so as to enhance resilience to climate change for sustainable development.
- Adopting integrated solutions through collaboration between government institutions and inclusive community networks that engage civil society and the private sector and that aim to implement regional policies and joint plans, in addition to applying knowledge and expertise to enhance water, food, agriculture and energy security.

### **A. Joint measures to combat sand and dust storms**

9. Within the framework of this project, ESCWA, through the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies and in coordination with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the World Meteorological Organization, the League of Arab States and other partners, seeks to build the capacity of Arab meteorological agencies within the framework of the Arab Climate Outlook Forum, and to organize inter-regional dialogues to combat the effects of sand and dust storms.

10. ESCWA is also conducting an analysis of sand and dust storms in the Mashreq region by assessing relevant changes in climate (such as the length of the drought season, the number of strong wind days, and seasonal temperatures), which were captured through climate modelling and projections derived from the

Regional Initiative for the Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR). The study also includes a review of historical data on sand and dust storms to identify the main climate and environmental factors associated with them in the Mashreq region, and the possibility of linking them to relevant indicators in the results of climate projections. The importance of this study lies in its goal to support early warning systems for sand and dust storms, improve Mashreq countries' ability to predict their occurrence, and provide knowledge and high-quality data to users to analyse the storms and identify their sources and mitigation measures.

## **B. Involving multiple stakeholders in the protection of biodiversity**

11. Biodiversity plays a critical role in building resilience to climate change, including through nature-based solutions that contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Consequently, collaboration between stakeholders on the protection of biodiversity was emphasized in the agendas of COP 27 (Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, 6–20 November 2022) and the 2022 United Nations Biodiversity Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (Montreal, Canada, 7–19 December 2022). Arab Governments engage in regional and international processes within the framework of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. For this reason, ESCWA seeks to respond to any technical support requests from member States to facilitate their participation and work in support of global goals related to biodiversity, renewable energy, food security, environment, water and agriculture, amid changing climate conditions.

12. In this context, ESCWA is participating in the organization of a regional event to engage multiple stakeholders in preserving biodiversity through regional exchange, consensus on regional priorities, with a focus on the following areas:

- Establishing a regional multi-stakeholder platform on biodiversity, which includes governmental and non-governmental experts in the Arab region and aims to enhance understanding, knowledge exchange and action in relation to regional challenges affecting biodiversity in the region. An inception meeting will be held to launch the regional event on 13 and 14 July 2023. The meeting will assess the existing regional knowledge base and other biodiversity-supporting mechanisms by establishing three groups to formulate project proposals.
- Operationalizing three working groups on nature-based solutions to address climate change, land degradation in arid agroecosystems, and renewable energy and biodiversity. An organization with expertise in the selected topics in the Arab region will lead each group.
- Raising awareness about the projects developed by each working group, to be presented at the second Middle East and North Africa Climate Week (second MENA Climate Week, Riyadh, 9–12 October 2023) and at relevant regional and global forums.

## **C. New regional climate projections**

13. Through the continued support of the Government of Sweden to ESCWA and RICCAR, the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) completed a set of six Mashreq Domain projections under the “fossil-fueled development” scenario SSP5–8.5, in line with the climate scenarios used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in the sixth assessment report. The Mashreq Domain projections were prepared using global climate models and reduced to regional levels. Under RICCAR, the following two reports were issued: the first presents the methodology used to prepare this set of projections ([E/ESCWA/CL1.CCS/2021/RICCAR/TECHNICAL NOTE.5](#)), and the second sets out the summary outcomes ([ESCWA/CL1.CCS/2021/RICCAR/TECHNICAL REPORT.7/REV.1](#)).

14. The Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute is currently working on a new set of regional climate projections for the SSP2–4.5 scenario, and the results are expected by the end of 2023. Users can browse the data portal on the RICCAR website ([www.riccar.org](http://www.riccar.org)), download climate data sets, and request data

and maps. ESCWA has responded to 44 requests from research and government bodies for RICCAR data over the past years.

## **II. Assessments to enhance adaptation in the water sector**

15. Climate data, analyses, forecasts and regional vulnerability assessments at the level of water basins assist decision makers in developing climate change adaptation strategies to manage water resources and support the various water-related sectors, so as to enhance their resilience amid extreme climate events. In this regard, ESCWA conducts several analyses and studies to utilize climate, hydrological and socioeconomic data, and prepare water resource management policies on scientific grounds.

### **A. Assessing the impact of climate change on groundwater resources**

16. Based on the results of the Mashreq Domain Regional Climate Modelling, ESCWA and its partners prepared two studies on the impact of climate change on groundwater resources in the Eocene aquifer system in the State of Palestine ([E/ESCWA/CL1.CCS/2021/RICCAR/TECHNICAL REPORT.8](#)) and in the Dibdibba aquifer system in Iraq ([E/ESCWA/CL1.CCS/2021/RICCAR/TECHNICAL REPORT.9](#)).

17. ESCWA continued to support the basin-level climate change impact analysis by drawing on the RICCAR-Arab Domain outputs set out in a report entitled "[Assessment of climate change impacts on groundwater resources using RICCAR data in the Beni-Amir aquifer \(Tadla complex, Morocco\)](#)". The methodology and analysis results were showcased at several training workshops and forums aimed at strengthening regional and national capacities to apply climate and hydrological models, and to improve understanding of the impact of climate change on water resources.

### **B. Assessing the impact of climate change on transboundary water resources**

18. ESCWA collaborated with the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) and member States to prepare case studies on transboundary water resources based on the results of regional climate projections for the Mashreq Domain under scenario SSP5–8.5. The studies assessed the impact of climate change on shared water resources in the Euphrates basin, with a focus on Iraq ([E/ESCWA/CL1.CCS/2021/RICCAR/TECHNICAL REPORT.11](#)), and in the Nahr el Kabir Al-Janoubi basin shared by Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic ([E/ESCWA/CL1.CCS/2021/RICCAR/TECHNICAL REPORT.10](#)).

### **C. Preparing watershed-level climate resilience packages**

19. The RICCAR Arab and Mashreq Domains projections provided a scientific basis for preparing basin management packages and building resilience to climate change for three basins. These studies were developed within the framework of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) project entitled "Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for water efficiency, productivity and sustainability in NENA countries", which is also funded by the Government of Sweden. Management packages have been prepared for Nahr el Kabir basin ([E/ESCWA/CL1.CCS/2022/RICCAR/Technical Report.14](#)) and Nahr al-Kalb in Lebanon ([E/ESCWA/CL1.CSS/2022/RICCAR/Technical Report.15](#)), and Algérois in Algeria ([E/ESCWA/CL1.CCS/2022/RICCAR/Technical Report.13](#)). The packages highlight the regions that are most vulnerable to climate change in the near term (2021–2040) and by mid-century (2041–2060), and propose a range of effective actions in the fields of knowledge development and management, water, agriculture, livelihood resilience, and land conservation in each of the three studied water basins.

### **III. Addressing climate change in the energy sector**

#### **A. Reducing small-scale renewable energy risks in rural areas of the Arab region**

20. ESCWA is implementing the Regional Initiative to Promote Small-Scale Renewable Energy Applications in Rural Areas of the Arab Region ([REGEND](#)), funded by the Government of Sweden, to enhance energy, water, food and livelihood security in rural communities. Within this framework, ESCWA is preparing a technical report on small-scale renewable energy de-risking in rural areas to achieve a positive transformation in communities by creating jobs, alleviating poverty, building resilience to climate change, and promoting gender equality and social inclusion. Moreover, de-risking tools can help overcome the barriers and risks that deprive individuals of sufficient energy to meet their personal needs and engage in productive activities.

21. As part of the International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, ESCWA organized an [expert group meeting](#) to identify business models that can be used to overcome barriers to the productive use of small-scale renewable energy in the Arab region. During the meeting, experts presented promising case studies from around the world and tools that could be applied across the Arab region.

22. Technical tools can help strengthen the capacity of officials in ESCWA member States. In this context, the report outlines prevailing business models and identifies a range of financial policies and tools to promote small-scale renewable energy technologies for productive use. Key outcomes include the following:

- Leveraging climate finance for de-risking small-scale renewable energy investments is critical to achieving sustainable growth and climate change mitigation. Climate finance can be channelled through Governments and international organizations to provide grants, loan guarantees, risk-sharing mechanisms, and technical assistance.
- Promoting microfinance to support the widespread adoption of affordable renewable energy technology. The Arab region can leverage a range of existing and potential tools to improve lending fundamentals by offering more flexible customized loans through loan providers, including international financial institutions.
- Formulating national strategies that integrate policies across interrelated sectors and that develop a specific plan to address major shortcomings. Such strategies are essential to creating an enabling environment that contributes to addressing capacity-building requirements and defining the roles and responsibilities of national and local authorities. Through these strategies, Governments can efficiently allocate the resources needed for plan implementation. Effective strategies play an important role in attracting external financing and private sector participation, which are critical to driving growth in the sector.

#### **B. Pathways to net-zero emission targets by mid-century**

23. Trajectories of current emissions in many countries do not align with the commitments of the Paris Agreement. There is, however, growing recognition of the need for immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Five Arab countries have pledged to achieve economy-wide net-zero emissions. Oman and the United Arab Emirates aim to achieve this goal by 2050, while Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have set the target for 2060.

24. During its presidency of the Group of 20 (G20) in 2020, Saudi Arabia launched the circular carbon economy ([CCE](#)) conceptual framework, which was endorsed by G20 as an essential tool for a low-carbon future. ESCWA is working with Saudi Arabia to establish the ESCWA centre for advancing emissions reduction, following its approval at the [seventh special session](#) of the ESCWA Executive Committee, held in Amman on 20 and 21 December 2022. The centre will offer opportunities to catalyse regional efforts to reduce carbon emissions, so as to achieve climate neutrality and facilitate the implementation of CCE. It will also

provide a regional platform to support the Arab region's positions in global dialogues on reducing carbon emissions.

25. As part of efforts to promote the concept of CCE, ESCWA recently organized a [specialized session](#) on enabling CCE, in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) at the [Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2023](#). The session generated recommendations on key areas of work for actors in the public and private sectors, with the aim of accelerating the deployment of CCE technology and stimulating innovation in energy-intensive industries in the Arab region.

26. Within the framework of technical cooperation programmes, ESCWA prepared a strategic framework to enable a fair and inclusive energy transition for Kuwait. It identified the main pillars for achieving sustainable energy systems using the CCE framework as a guideline for developing sustainable energy pathways. A road map was also developed to highlight key actions in various energy-intensive sectors in the short, medium and long terms.

#### **IV. Supporting climate finance efforts**

27. ESCWA seeks to bridge gaps in climate finance by increasing knowledge, building capacity, and supporting communication mechanisms among stakeholders. In this context, ESCWA organized the [Arab Regional Forum on Climate Initiatives to Finance Climate Action](#), held in Beirut on 15 September 2022. The Forum was one of five regional forums organized by the Egyptian presidency in preparation for COP 27, in collaboration with United Nations high-level climate change leaders and the five United Nations regional commissions. The Forum addressed the needs of Arab countries in terms of financing climate action to ensure water, energy and food security, in addition to existing financing flows and gaps. A total of 30 projects were submitted, of which 22 focused on adaptation and 83 per cent focused on water. The outcomes of the Forum were presented at a COP 27 side event.

28. In support of the Water Action Agenda, ESCWA launched the [Arab Initiative for Mobilizing Climate Finance for Water](#) at the United Nations Water Conference (New York, 22–24 March 2023), in partnership with the League of Arab States, the Islamic Development Bank, the Green Climate Fund, FAO, the Government of Sweden, and other collaborating organizations. The initiative aims to strengthen regional capacity to mobilize financing for water action, and support regional and global commitments to increase financing for adaptation and to strengthen resilience to climate change and its risks. The initiative's activities began with the convening of an Arab forum on financing climate action in the field of water in 2023.

29. As part of efforts by the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies to foster knowledge on climate finance and related challenges, ESCWA issued a policy brief entitled "[Climate finance needs and flows in the Arab region](#)", based on data from Arab States' nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and other sources of climate action-related financial flows. Moreover, ESCWA is preparing a policy note on climate finance concepts and green investments from Arab funds and global financial institutions. The document aims to improve understanding of current regional financing trends, which can help identify potential financing gaps and their type, and promote the definition of climate finance objectives. The analysis also served as a contribution to the Arab Conference for Cooperation on Climate Change, organized by the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, in collaboration with ESCWA (Kuwait, 29 and 30 May 2023).

30. ESCWA, in partnership with the UNFCCC secretariat and the League of Arab States, and in consultation with regional stakeholders, formulated a strategy to access and mobilize climate finance under the Needs-based Climate Action Finance Project until 2030. The strategy is based on the [Technical Assessment of Climate Finance in the Arab States](#), prepared within the framework of this project, and which is currently under consideration by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE).



## V. Climate change negotiations and the Paris Agreement

### A. Twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties

31. COP 27 was held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, from 6 to 18 November 2022, and produced a comprehensive decision known as the [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#). One of its most important outcomes was the first-time agreement to finance losses and damages caused by climate change. The decision points to gaps in responding to adaptation needs and calls on developed countries to urgently increase climate finance, technology transfer and capacity-building so as to respond to the adaptation needs of developing countries. The importance of protecting and conserving water and ecosystems, including river basins, groundwater and lakes, was also highlighted; and States were urged to further integrate water into adaptation efforts, and launch the four-year Sharm el-Sheikh joint work programme on the implementation of climate action in agriculture and food security.

32. The decision emphasizes the urgent need to transform energy systems to become safer, more reliable and more resilient, in view of the unprecedented global energy crisis, by accelerating clean and equitable transitions to renewable energy in this critical decade. The process requires securing around \$4 trillion annually to invest in renewable energy until 2030 to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. The decision also highlights the continuing challenges faced by many developing countries in accessing finance, and the need for further efforts to streamline access to finance mechanisms and processes.

33. ESCWA participated in several high-level technical sessions at COP 27, including on financing adaptation (jointly with the Egyptian Presidency of the Conference); the role of climate change in food security (under the Response Programme of the Islamic Development Bank); climate finance; and sustainable development and accelerating the international CCE action plan to address climate change and support economic transformation. At COP 27, ESCWA issued a technology brief on carbon dioxide emissions in energy-intensive industries in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. ESCWA also participated in a session on synergy between the three Rio conventions, and supported the daily coordination meetings of the Arab Group of Negotiators on key priority negotiation issues for Arab States with the League of Arab States. ESCWA acted as a partner in the Water Pavilion, and organized the second day of activities at the Pavilion on "Climate resilience and low carbon approaches, systems and technologies", in collaboration with the Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The full list of ESCWA activities is available at [www.unescwa.org/events/escwa-cop27](http://www.unescwa.org/events/escwa-cop27).

### B. Supporting the Arab Group of Negotiators

34. ESCWA continues to support the Arab Group of Negotiators on Climate Change, in partnership with the League of Arab States, the Regional Office for West Asia of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Cairo Office of UNESCO, through a series of workshops to build the capacity of Arab States in climate change negotiations. ESCWA has organized 15 workshops since 2013.

35. The fourteenth regional workshop was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on 29 and 30 March as part of MENA Climate Week 2022. The fifteenth regional workshop (Muscat, 4–6 October 2022) was hosted by the Civil Aviation Authority of Oman in preparation for COP 27 to discuss issues related to adaptation, mitigation, financing, the enhanced transparency framework, response measures, and technology. Discussions also focused on the science-policy interface in climate change negotiations, and on the importance of scientific studies and analyses of climate change and its effects on strengthening the Arab position in negotiations. ESCWA also supported the thirty-third coordination meeting of the Arab Group, held on 17 and 18 April, to discuss the main outcomes of COP 27 and prepare for the next session. The sixteenth workshop will be hosted by the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) in Kuwait in July 2023.

## **VI. Recommendations and the way forward**

36. The 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28) is scheduled to take place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 30 November to 12 December 2023. It will include the first comprehensive global assessment of progress and efforts made by States to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. The issues of energy and water will be a priority because of their connection to climate change, especially in the Arab region which seeks to achieve energy and water security amid extreme climate events. Other priorities on the COP 28 agenda in relation to climate change include mitigation, adaptation, financing, and loss and damage. ESCWA will continue to support negotiators from its member States. The sixteenth workshop, to be held in July 2023, will follow up on negotiation developments following the Bonn Climate Change Conference (Bonn, 5–15 June 2023). ESCWA will also participate in the organization of the second MENA Climate Week, which will be held in Riyadh from 9 to 12 October 2023.

37. Progress in climate action in the Arab region will require the following measures:

(a) Strengthening regional and intersectoral coordination on climate action through the work of the ESCWA Committee on Energy and the Committee on Water Resources, and through intergovernmental processes supported by the League of Arab States and Arab Governments within the framework of the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies;

(b) Encouraging more research and studies on climate change modelling, and keeping abreast of technical developments and geographic information system (GIS) technology to obtain more accurate climate forecasts for better assessment. This includes studying the impact of extreme climate conditions on the Arab region (including sandstorms, dust storms, floods and droughts), so as to prepare science-based adaptation policies, plans and projects, particularly in the water sector and water-dependent sectors, such as agriculture and biodiversity;

(c) Supporting common Arab positions in global negotiations on climate change through capacity-building workshops, identifying the region's water and energy priorities, sharing knowledge and expertise, and using these positions to inform decision-making and planning;

(d) Supporting climate change mitigation activities, enabling CCE, and integrating circular economy principles into NDCs, with the aim of enhancing resource efficiency, leveraging financing opportunities to mitigate climate change and strengthen resilience, and promoting ecological design and waste management through integrated and sustainable action;

(e) Utilizing existing financing funds, the new Loss and Damage Fund, and regional and global financing opportunities to implement projects aimed at climate change adaptation and mitigation; and strengthening national capacity to identify priorities, assess needs, losses and damages, and develop project and programme proposals.

38. To assist member States in carrying out the above-mentioned measures, the ESCWA secretariat will continue to undertake the following:

(a) Strengthening national capacity to effectively mainstream climate action and NDCs into national development policies and plans and key sectors such as water and energy, through knowledge-sharing and awareness-raising on best practices and opportunities;

(b) Supporting member States in mobilizing climate finance by strengthening collaboration with international and regional financial institutions and building capacity to develop and implement project proposals, particularly in relation to adaptation and mitigation measures that could enhance resilience;

(c) Strengthening the science-policy interface, namely climate change adaptation policies in the water sector, through RICCAR projections and analyses and based on the forecasts of the Arab Climate Outlook Forum; and assessing transboundary risks of sand and dust storms and extreme climate events, using the new projections;

(d) Building the national capacity of member States in preparing sustainable energy policies, especially in terms of new and renewable energy, and in formulating the CCE conceptual framework to achieve the identified strategic objectives.

-----