



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Multi-stakeholder Platform for Protecting Biodiversity: Inception Meeting
Beirut, 12-13 July 2023

AGENDA

Wednesday, 12 July 2023

8:30 – 9:00

Registration

The meeting will be held at the United Nations House in the Main Conference Hall (B1).

To participate virtually, kindly register and connect through the following link:

[https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYvcOyhgD8vHdELpHan7DdszH1kv2Racj9D](https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tJYvcOyhgD8vHdELpHan7DdszH1kv2Racj9D)

Opening Session

Moderator:

Ms. Carol Chouchani Cherfane, Director, Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies; Cluster Leader, Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

9:00 – 9:20

Welcome and opening remarks

- *H.E. Ms. Nisreen Tamimi, Chairwoman of the Environmental Quality Authority, State of Palestine*
- *H.E. Mr. Nasser Yassin, Minister of Environment, Republic of Lebanon - Delivered by Mr. George Mitri, Advisor to the Minister*
- *Mr. Christoffer Burnett Cargill, Counsellor, Head of Development Cooperation, Embassy of Sweden, Beirut*
- *Mr. Mounir Tabet, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCWA*

9:20 – 9:30

Review of the meeting objectives and agenda

- *Ms. Sara Daniel, Research Assistant, CCNRSC, ESCWA*

Session 1

Climate Action through Biodiversity Conservation in the Arab Region

Moderator:

Mr. Hammou Laamrani, Economic Affairs Officer, Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster, ESCWA

9:30 – 10:30

Panel discussion

- *Ms. Natalia Boulad, Programme Manager, Protected Areas, World Heritage and Biodiversity Programme, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Regional Office for West Asia (Online)*

- *Ms. Elsa Sattout, Programme Specialist, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Cairo Office*
- *Ms. Geetha Nayak, Regional Coordinator, Biodiversity and Ecosystems, Regional Office for West Asia, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/ROWA)*
- *Mr. Belal Qtishat, Chair of the Arab Working Group on the Implementation of Biodiversity and Desertification Related Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Director of Nature Protection Directorate, Ministry of Environment, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Online)*
- *Mr. Mahmoud Fathallah, Head of Secretariat, Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), Director, Environmental Meteorological Affairs Department, League of Arab States (LAS)*

Discussion

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break

Session 2 Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Resilience with Nature-Based Solutions

Moderator: Mr. Tarek Sadek, Water Resource and Climate Change Officer, Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster, ESCWA

11:00 – 11:15 Nature-based Solutions for Climate Resilience – Overview

- *Ms. Dima Kharbotli, Economic Affairs Assistant, Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster, ESCWA*

11:15 – 12:30 Panel discussion:

- *Ms. Dania Abdul Malak, Director, ETC-UMA, University of Malaga (Online)*
- *Ms. Suhad Al-Hedny, University Lecturer, Environmental Sciences, Al-Qasim Green University, Republic of Iraq*
- *Mr. Hazem Cherni, Project Coordinator, Les Amis de CAPTE, Republic of Tunisia*
- *Mr. Frédéric de Dinechin, Senior Adviser, Water, Environment and Blue Economy, Union for the Mediterranean (Online)*
- *Mr. Khaleel Abu Afifeh, Forest Expert, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD)*

Discussion

Session 3 Preserving Biodiversity and Combating Land Degradation in Agricultural Ecosystems

Moderator: Ms. Reem Nejdawi, Chief, Food and Environment Policies Team, Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster, ESCWA

12:30 – 12:45 Land Degradation in Arid Agricultural Ecosystems – Overview

- *Ms. Carla Khater, Research Director, Senior Ecologist, National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS), Republic of Lebanon*

12:45 – 14:00 Panel discussion:

- *Ms. Theresa Wong, Natural Resources Officer (Climate Change), Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO/RNE)*

- *Ms. Ahlam Marouf, Biodiversity Expert, CBD Coordinator, Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD)*
- *Mr. Mwaffak Chikh Ali, General Manager, Earth Link & Advanced Resources Development (ELARD), Syrian Arab Republic*
- *Mr. Abdallah Alkloub, Project Manager, Land Degradation Neutrality, Royal Scientific Society (RSS), Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*

Discussion

14:00 – 15:00 Lunch at United Nations House Cafeteria (Ground Floor)

Session 4 Balancing Synergies and Trade-Offs between Renewable Energy and Biodiversity Conservation

Moderator: Ms. Radia Sedaoui, Chief, Energy Team, Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster, ESCWA

15:00 – 15:15 Renewable Energy and Biodiversity – Overview

- *Mr. Omar Kaaki, Research Assistant, Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster, ESCWA*

15:15 – 15:30 Balancing Renewable Energy Risks and Benefits on Biodiversity

- *Ms. Ute Collier, Deputy Director, Knowledge, Policy and Finance Centre, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) (Online)*

15:30 – 16:30 Panel discussion:

- *Mr. Jauad El Kharraz, Executive Director, Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RCREEE)*
- *Mr. Ahmed Abdelmaksoud Abdallah, Egypt National Project Coordinator, Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Arab Republic of Egypt*
- *Mr. Gaby Kassab, President and Founder, ECOSERV, Republic of Lebanon*

Discussion

Session 5 Opportunities for Financing Biodiversity and Framing of Working Groups

Moderator: Ms. Carol Chouchani Churfane, ESCWA

16:30 – 16:45 Financing biodiversity: opportunities and insights

- *Ms. Imèn Meliane, Senior Climate Change Specialist, Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat (Online)*

16:45 – 17:00 Framing of the Objectives, Themes and Scope of the Working Groups on Nature-based Solutions for Climate Resilience, Land Degradation in Arid Agricultural Ecosystems, and Renewable Energy and Biodiversity

- *Ms. Julie Abou Arab, Associate Coordination Officer, Climate Resilience for Inclusive Sustainable Development through Regional Cooperation project, ESCWA*

Discussion

End of Day 1

Thursday, 13 July 2023

- 9:00 – 9:15 Recap of Day 1
- Mr. Hammou Laamrani, ESCWA
 - Ms. Julie Abou Arab, ESCWA

Session 6 Access to Finance for Biodiversity Conservation Projects

Moderator: Ms. Sara Hess, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster, ESCWA

- 9:15 – 10:45 Panel discussion:
- *Ms. Anita de Horde, Co-founder, Finance for Biodiversity Foundation (Online)*
 - *Mr. Min Yin, Regional Technical Specialist (Ecosystems and Biodiversity), UNDP Regional Hub for the Arab States*
 - *Mr. Bradley Hiller, Lead Climate Change and Environment Specialist, Resilience and Climate Action Department, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)*
 - *Ms. Dalia A. Kader, Chief Sustainability Officer, Commercial International Bank, Arab Republic of Egypt*
 - *Mr. Walid Nasr, Lead Regional Technical Specialist, Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)*
 - *Mr. Abderrahmane Ait Lhaj, Project Coordinator, National Agency for the Development of Oasis and Argan Areas (ANDZOA), Kingdom of Morocco (Online)*

Discussion

10:45 – 11:15 Coffee Break

Session 7 Breakout Sessions: Working Group Discussions

Facilitators: Working Group on Nature-based Solutions for Climate Resilience

Room: Main Conference Hall (B1)

Link: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYvcOyqhD8vHdELpHan7DdszH1kv2Racj9D>
(Same as plenary session link)

- Mr. Tarek Sadek, ESCWA – Facilitator
- Ms. Dima Kharbotli, ESCWA – Rapporteur

Working Group on Land Degradation in Arid Agricultural Ecosystems

Room: Committee Room I (B1)

Link: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwkduCvqjkuGNFkreZsur_W7qSyAhELjsCX

- Ms. Reem Nejdawi, ESCWA – Facilitator
- Ms. Sara Daniel, ESCWA – Rapporteur

Working Group on Renewable Energy and Biodiversity

Room: Committee Room II (B1)

Link: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0vdumtqD8iG9VnuwaUB5gcpzk_Icr36tEh

- Ms. Radia Sedaoui, ESCWA – Facilitator
- Mr. Omar Kaaki, ESCWA – Rapporteur

- 11:15 – 13:30 Breakout Session Discussions to:
- Review objectives and scope of each working group
 - Define terms of reference, guidelines and timeline
 - Outline the roles and responsibilities of working group members
 - Identify key challenges and opportunities in thematic areas
 - Discuss potential project ideas (relevance, impact, feasibility, and scalability)
- 13:30 – 14:30 Lunch at United Nations House Cafeteria (Ground Floor)

Session 8 Feedback from Working Groups

Moderator: Mr. Hammou Laamrani, ESCWA

- 14:30 – 16:00 Reporting back on the outcomes of the working group discussions:
- Working Group on Nature-based Solutions
 - Working Group on Land Degradation
 - Working Group on Renewable Energy

Discussion

Closing Session

- 16:00 – 16:30 Next steps and closing remarks
- Mr. Hammou Laamrani, ESCWA
 - Ms. Carol Chouchani Cherfane, ESCWA

End of meeting
