

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

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Item 18 of the provisional agenda

**Arab Vision 2045: striving to fulfil aspirations through deliberation,
determination and action****First round-table discussion: premises and pillars of the Arab Vision 2045****Introduction**

1. The Arab region is experiencing one of the most difficult periods in its modern history. Countries and societies are encountering major challenges owing to local, regional and global factors, including war, occupation, economic and societal instability, external intervention, failure to keep pace with technological transformations, inability to tackle the effects of climate change, and water and food insecurity. In addition to these numerous factors and their varied impacts and repercussions for different Arab countries, the increasing numbers of refugees and forcibly displaced persons are a great cause for concern, notably following the current war by the Israeli occupation authorities on the besieged Gaza Strip.
2. The secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States seek to strengthen regional cooperation in multiple economic, social and development fields. There is consensus that commonalities among these countries and the magnitude of cross-border challenges require regional efforts alongside national efforts.
3. In line with their mandates to promote regional integration and cooperation, and to support member States in achieving sustainable development, the ESCWA secretariat and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States have formulated a vision for the Arab region for 2045, a year that marks the centenary of the founding of both the League of Arab States and the United Nations.
4. This vision, entitled “Arab Vision 2045: striving to fulfil aspirations through deliberation, determination and action”, is a development vision aimed at bolstering the confidence of Arab peoples in a secure, just and prosperous future, based on science and action, and cultural and societal renewal.
5. The following are some of the premises of the Vision:
 - (a) The Arab Vision 2045 aligns with and complements national plans and visions at the regional level;
 - (b) The future belongs to young people and future generations, and therefore their voices, opinions and aspirations must be the basis of any future vision. They have been taken into account in the preparation of the Vision by adopting a participatory consultative approach;

(c) The Vision's formulation benefited from accumulated experiences in the Arab region, especially in terms of framing aspirations and goals, developing plans and ways to achieve them, from previous successful and relevant regional experiences, and from partnerships and experiences from other regions of the world, with a clear perspective on the features and specificities of the Arab region.

6. As part of efforts to outline future trajectories, the Vision's authoring team, in collaboration with Arab thinkers, identified 10 megatrends significantly impacting the Arab region. These include changes in the global economic polarity; changes in the concepts of war, security and peace; demographic transformations; new methods, means and patterns of production and consumption; dynamics of vocational training, human capabilities and the future of work; rapid urban and city expansion; a widening gap in social justice and equity; climate change; transformations resulting from the fourth and fifth industrial revolutions; and transformations resulting from the cultural and civilizational diversity of the world.

I. Objectives of the round-table discussion

7. The round-table discussion aims to identify the views of Arab Governments on the premises and pillars of the Arab Vision 2045, and the extent to which they relate to the 10 megatrends in the world that impact the region.

8. By examining the various pillars of the Vision, the round-table discussion will also highlight their interlinkages with national development plans, so as to stress their complementary nature while identifying the foundations for implementing the Vision at national level.

II. Topics of discussion

9. The topics proposed for discussion revolve around the following main questions:

(a) What is the vision of Arab Governments in dealing with major megatrends identified by the Vision in view of the specific challenges facing the region? What impact will these megatrends have on the future of the region and on the implementation of the Vision?

(b) How are the six pillars of the Vision interconnected with national development plans?

(c) How can the Vision be an effective tool to drive national development efforts?

III. Participants

10. Participants at the round-table discussion will include ministers from member States of ESCWA and the League of Arab States, researchers, and representatives of the United Nations system.

IV. Moderator

11. A specialized moderator from the Arab region will moderate the discussion.

V. Language

12. The discussion will be conducted in Arabic.

VI. Focal point

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