



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



With the support of the IOM Regional  
Office for Middle East and North Africa



## 8<sup>th</sup> Workshop on Voluntary National Reviews in the Arab Region

Hybrid (Online and in-person in Beirut), 17 March 2023

### Information Note

*The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development established principles for a follow-up and review process that is robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, and transparent. Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) lie at the heart of this follow-up and review process. Through VNRs, member states report on their progress, highlight matters of priority, and share their experiences including successes, challenges, and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. VNRs can also help mobilize multi-stakeholder partnerships. By 2022, 291 VNRs have been submitted to the HLPF globally including 31 VNRs from 21 Arab countries. Five Arab countries are planning to submit VNRs in 2023, namely: Bahrain, Comoros, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Syria.*

*To support Arab States, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in partnership with the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the League of Arab States, has been organizing regional VNR workshops. The workshops provide a space for knowledge exchange and peer learning on VNRs in the Arab region. Since October 2019, seven workshops have been organized. Moreover, ESCWA established the Arab VNR Community of Practice (CoP) as an informal peer-learning mechanism that brings together government officials from Arab countries involved in the preparation of VNRs at a working level. For more information on ESCWA VNR support, please visit the [dedicated page](#).*

#### I. Objectives and thematic focus

As in previous editions, the 8<sup>th</sup> regional VNR workshop will provide a **platform for dialogue and peer learning** among Arab countries on VNR-related issues in the Arab countries. As the second workshop to be held in the 2023 VNR cycle, it will give an opportunity to the Arab countries presenting their VNR at the 2023 HLPF to inform about their preparations so far, the challenges, and the way forward.

Moreover, the 8<sup>th</sup> workshop will **focus on the theme of migration**, providing participants with in-depth practical guidance on integrating migration issues in VNRs. This responds to the need expressed during the VNR CoP focused discussion on migration in SDG monitoring and reporting, organized online on 13 December 2022, which highlighted migration as a multi-faceted development issue in the Arab region that is not adequately addressed in Arab country VNRs. It also echoes global calls to Member States to give due attention to migration when preparing VNRs.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See paragraph 84 of the Secretary General's report to the UN General Assembly on International migration and development ([A/77/236](#)). The report also asserted that the United Nations system will assist Member States in this regard [para. 85].

## II. Agenda outline

### 1. Preparations for the 2023 Arab country VNRs: Progress and challenges

2023 VNR countries will discuss with their peers their ongoing VNR preparations, the approach they are taking and the challenges they are facing. Updates concerning preparations for the 2023 HLPF will also be provided.

It is to be noted that a VNR roundtable will be organized within the frame of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development on 15 March 2023, which will allow Arab Countries presenting their VNRs in 2023 to share key messages coming out of their VNR and illustrate how the 2023 VNR is becoming a tool to accelerate SDG implementation and mobilize partnerships.

### 2. Integrating migration in Arab country VNRs:

The workshop will explore the concept of migration and its multiple linkages with the SDGs. Regional and global experiences will be shared on how migration is monitored and reported in VNRs. Moreover, participants will undertake practical exercises on integrating migration in VNRs **based on a guidance note under preparation by ESCWA and IOM**. They will discuss structural challenges that hinder an adequate integration of migration in VNRs and identify measures that can be taken to limit these challenges.

## III. Organizational and Logistical Details

### A. Date and venue

The workshop will be organized as a hybrid event (online and in-person at the UN House, ESCWA premises in Beirut, Lebanon) on 17 March 2023, back-to-back with the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, which will be held in the same venue during 14-16 March 2023.

### B. Participants and registration

The workshop targets government officials in Arab countries involved in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, particularly those engaged in the preparation of VNRs and members of the VNR Community of Practice (CoP). Participants will also include experts from regional, international and United Nations organizations. Experts involved in reporting on migration issues are also welcome to attend.

Participation in this workshop is by invitation only.

### C. Working languages

Arabic and English are the working languages of the workshop. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in Arabic, English, and French.

### D. Correspondence

Correspondence regarding logistical arrangements of the regional workshop should be addressed to:  
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