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Sixteenth Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries, City of Kuwait, Kuwait, 16 – 18 July 2023

Information Note

I. BACKGROUND

The Arab region is facing major challenges that are hindering its ability to achieve sustainable socio-economic development. Climate change and climate variability are among these challenges that are imposing additional stresses on the region. In the past years, it has been evident that the region is subject to extreme climate events such as droughts, floods, sand and dust storms and intense heat waves and Arab countries were facing difficulties in adapting to these impacts.

Arab governments have been actively engaged in international negotiations pursued under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and have participated in the preparatory processes and negotiation sessions convened by the Conference of the Parties (COP). They were also actively engaged in negotiations leading to the Paris Agreement, which was adopted at COP 21 in Paris in 2015. This Agreement represents a turning point in climate negotiations as it establishes a common framework that commits all countries, including developing countries for the first time, to commit their best efforts to reaching the long-term temperature goal of holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C and now to below 1.5°C as a key outcome of the COP 26 at Glasgow. The provisions of the Agreement include requirements on developed and developing countries to submit successive Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to report on their actions toward implementation of the Agreement.

COP 26 was convened in Glasgow, United Kingdom from 31 October to 13 November 2021 where parties adopted the ‘Glasgow Climate Pact’ and completed the Paris Agreement’s rulebook. The package of decisions consists of a range of agreed items including keeping 1.5 degrees alive through pursuing net zero targets by mid-century as well as deep reductions in other greenhouse gases, fulfilling the pledge of providing USD 100 billion annually from developed to developing countries, balancing finance between mitigation and adaptation, and launching the Glasgow–Sharm El-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation. Parties also resolved issues related to market mechanisms and non-market approaches, Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF), and common timeframes for NDCs. During the World Leaders Summit at COP 26, 120 world leaders announced commitments for net-zero targets as well as pledges related to limiting coal, methane, fossil fuels and combatting deforestation.

The first MENA Climate Week was held in Dubai from 28 to 31 March 2022 as a step towards COP 27. It hosted 161 events on various topics and themes including, but not limited to, energy transition, long-term national planning, green recovery, climate finance, resilience, climate security, adaptation, food and water security, disaster risk management, role of youth in national climate plans, digitalization, and technology. ESCWA in partnership with the League of Arab States (LAS) and the UNFCCC organized a consultation on the Arab Climate Finance Access and Mobilization Strategy. Also, ESCWA and partners held the 14th Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries for two consecutive days.

COP 27 held in Sharm el- Sheikh, Egypt from 6 to 18 November was a milestone for the Arab region and in climate negotiations, specifically for the agenda item on loss and damage. World leaders gathered and reiterated their commitments towards mitigation and adaptation and voiced their views on progress in the climate agenda as well as their concerns about climate change impacts on socio-economic sectors as well as extreme weather events. While the USD 100 billion goal annually has not been achieved yet, Parties agreed on a new funding for loss and damage associated with adverse impacts of climate change. The conference concluded with the ‘Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan’, a cover decision similar to the ‘Glasgow Climate Pact’, with focus on, inter alia, science, energy, mitigation, adaptation, early warning, loss and damage, finance, technology transfer, biodiversity and ecosystems as well engagement of non-Party stakeholders in climate action.

Upon the request of the LAS, ESCWA has provided technical support to Arab negotiators on climate change since October 2013. ESCWA jointly organized with the LAS the first four regional workshops. UNEP has joined as a partner since the fifth workshop and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Cairo Office joined the partnership starting with the seventh workshop. Several Arab States have also hosted these capacity building workshops, as outlined in the list below:

- The first workshop (Amman, 22-24 October 2013) addressed climate change mitigation and adaptation actions and strengthened the capacity of Arab representatives for negotiations;
- The second workshop (Amman, 26-28 May 2014) improved skills for negotiating new international agreements based on ESCWA’s “Guide on climate change negotiations for representatives and negotiators from Arab countries”;
- The third workshop (Kuwait, 11-13 November 2014) prepared Arab officials for the global negotiations that took place at COP-20 in Lima, Peru;
- The fourth workshop (Doha, 19-21 May 2015) assisted Arab officials with preparatory negotiations led to COP-21, including the issues and ambitions proposed for negotiation;
- The fifth workshop (Cairo, 17-19 November 2015) fostered mutual understanding for a unified Arab position, taking into consideration the challenges and limits of such common positions, in preparation for COP-21 in Paris;
- The sixth workshop (Cairo, 3-6 April 2016) discussed the legal aspects of the Paris Agreement and its implications, access to finance through the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and technology assistance available through the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN);
- The seventh workshop (Rabat, 25-27 September 2016) prepared Arab States for COP-22, discussed the legal effect of different provisions of the Paris Agreement, including its entry into force, as well as means of implementation, including access to finance through the GCF and its accredited agencies;
- The eighth workshop (Beirut, 10-13 April 2017) discussed the outcomes of COP-22, the means of implementation outlined in the Paris Agreement, the transparency framework and the global stocktake of the Paris Agreement, and the engagement of Arab States with the GCF;
- The ninth workshop (Cairo, 9-12 October 2017) discussed the means of implementation of the Paris Agreement with a focus on finance and technology, the implications on emissions of the expected withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement, and associated legal and financial challenges;
- The tenth workshop (Kuwait, 3-5 April 2018) addressed the latest developments on the 2018 Facilitative Dialogue and issues related to agriculture as a new item under the SBSTA and SBI, the implications on trade, response measures, in addition to mapping trade-related response measures in NDCs, including measures related to the energy sector, green industrial policies, green government procurement, financial and direct trade measures, and international cooperation;
- The eleventh workshop (Cairo, 13-15 November 2018) discussed the latest negotiation issues related to the Paris Agreement Work Program (PAWP) on adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology, carbon markets, trade, etc. and the 2018 Facilitative Dialogue (Talanoa Dialogue) outcomes in preparation for COP-24 and discussion of a Paris Agreement “rulebook”;

- The twelfth workshop (Beirut, 7-8 April 2019) addressed Adaptation as an element of the NDCs and defining an adaptation global goal and implementation of Article 4.7, Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on market and non-market approaches and possible outcomes and tradeoffs, response measures and the operationalization of related policy measures to respond to expected impacts and technology framework implementation and opportunities for support; and
- The thirteenth workshop (Cairo, 3-5 November 2019) discussed the pending issues on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on market and non-market approaches and possible outcomes and trade-offs as well as the latest related to the Katowice Climate Package including adaptation as an element of the NDCs and implementation of Article 4.7.
- The fourteenth workshop (Dubai, 28-31 March 2022) discussed the latest outcomes of COP 26 related to the Glasgow Climate Pact and decisions on issues related to Article 6, Article 13 (Transparency), adaptation, mitigation, finance, and KJWA. Also, discussions covered national capacity building needs for implementing the outcome decisions of COP 26 and preparations for COP 27.
- The fifteenth workshop (Muscat, 4-6 October 2022) continued discussions on outcomes of COP 26 related to response measures, adaptation, finance and included a training on transparency reporting under the ETF (Article 13) in addition to discussions on net-zero scenarios. The workshop concluded with a closed meeting for the Arab group to discuss main issues for COP 27.

Technical support on specific agenda items was provided as requested by the Arab Group of Negotiators, mainly on the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF). In this context, ESCWA, UNEP and the UNFCCC secretariat jointly convened a regional technical capacity building workshop from 4 to 6 October 2021 to enhance capacities of national experts and negotiators from the Arab region in transitioning from the existing Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) arrangements to the ETF under the Paris Agreement.

Furthermore, LAS, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and ESCWA organized a Virtual Workshop on KJWA on 27 July 2020 which focussed on ways to include agriculture in negotiations on climate change and introducing KJWA, which includes 6 key topics related to the agricultural sector in the Arab region. In addition, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) and ESCWA organized a joint workshop on 11-12 December 2021 for Arab agricultural experts from the relevant ministries and national agricultural research centres to develop priority climate actions in agriculture and discuss the outcomes of the COP 26 on KJWA under the Paris Agreement.

OBJECTIVES OF THE 16TH WORKSHOP

The year 2023 is strategic for addressing climate change challenges as COP 28, which will take place during 30 November – 12 December 2023 in Dubai, will conclude the first global stocktake process of the Paris Agreement. In this context, the Sixteenth Regional Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries will be held from 16 to 18 July 2023 in Kuwait City in partnership with the LAS, UNEP/ROWA, UNESCO/Cairo Office, and it will be hosted by the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC). This workshop is particularly important as it will cover outcomes of the 58th sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies (Bonn Climate Change Conference) taking place between 5 and 15 June 2023 in Bonn. The workshop also aims to support the Arab Group of Negotiators in discussing and implementing outcome decisions of COP 27 and to initiate conversation ahead of the COP 28.

In addition to addressing the outcomes of COP 27 and the 58th SBs, the workshop aims to focus discussions on the following topics:

- Decisions and progress on impacts of implementation of response measures: Katowice committee of experts (KCI); tools and methodologies for assessment of economic impacts of response measures;
- Latest updates on loss and damage: Warsaw international mechanism, the new fund and operationalization of the Santiago Network; in addition to related work on assessing loss and damage in the Arab region;
- Developments on Article 6 and implications and/or opportunities of carbon markets in Arab countries;
- Latest updates on the Global Stocktake process;
- Latest updates on the global goal on adaptation, and adaptation efforts in the region, with focus on adaptation in water;

- Energy-related priorities and circular carbon economy to support implementation of the Paris Agreement in the region;
- Regional positions and priorities for action and preparations for COP 28.

II. PARTICIPANTS

Participants are mostly senior negotiators from Arab States with hands-on experience serving on national negotiation teams. Arab Governments are invited to nominate junior negotiators in their delegations to the workshop who are qualified to become members of future national negotiation teams. The workshop also aims to target experts in the energy field and economic modelers.

III. LANGUAGE

Language of the virtual meeting will be Arabic and English, which will be used interchangeably. English and Arabic interpretation will not be available.

IV. VENUE AND DATE

The workshop will be convened at OAPEC headquarters in Kuwait City, Kuwait from 16 to 18 July 2023.

V. CONTACTS

For inquiries or further information, kindly contact the following focal points of the meeting:

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